




THREE OF A KIND

RICHARD BURTON





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_Y0-AAO-666

THREE OF A KIND



SO THE THREE FACED THE OTHER TWO.

[Frontispiece. See p. 180.]

THREE OF A KIND

THE STORY OF AN OLD MUSICIAN
A NEWSBOY AND A COCKER DOG

BY

RICHARD BURTON

AUTHOR OF

"DUMB IN JUNE," "RAHAB," "LITERARY
"LIKINGS," ETC. .

Illustrated from drawings by
FRANK T. MERRILL

BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1908

Copyright, 1908,
BY LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

All rights reserved.

Printers
S. J. PARKHILL & CO. BOSTON, U. S. A.

To the gentle might of music ; to the wonderful magic of love ; and to the dear memory of Dun.

PREFACE

Is there not something heart-warming, O Reader, in the very number three, — hardly less mystic, too, in its suggestions than the number seven? Is it not a foul misrepresentation, the saying that two's company, three is a crowd? By the shades of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, a thousand times, Yea! Do not the theodicies of all nature make sacred the august mystery of the trinity, while for humbler uses, mankind has ever and anon seized on triple alliances, whether stately with the nations or simple in some fireside group, to express its faith in such a numeral. The very word *tribe* bears witness to its ancient power. In Mother

Preface

Goose we count “one, two, three, out goes she,” and the words are ruddy with childhood joys: we call for “three times three” right heartily when we cheer the flag; or, straining at our posts, wait until the number be counted, ere racing for the coveted goal. Man’s life, sacred or secular, ethnic or individual, is inextricably intertwined with this thought of three. Listen then, to a little tale of three friends, and may it, albeit homely enough, serve to strengthen our belief that it is a genial good number for life or literature, all about the world.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE THREE AT HOME	3
II. HOW NUMBER TWO CAME	25
III. THE COMING OF NUMBER THREE	51
IV. SUNDAY AFIELD	71
V. DUN TO THE RESCUE	101
VI. LUCK CHANGES	125
VII. THE WOLF AND THE DOG	149
VIII. FATHER AND SON	187
IX. A PAIR OF MUMMERS	209
X. CHRISTMAS EVE	243

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SO THE THREE FACED THE OTHER TWO	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE DOG SHOWED NOT THE SLIGHTEST INTENTION OF DEPARTURE . . .	<i>Page 57</i>
THE OLD MUSICIAN WAS MAKING HIS FIDDLE SING	“ 108
BOTH BOY AND MAN RESTED THEIR HANDS GENTLY ON THE WAVY BLACK HAIR OF THE FAITHFUL DOG	“ 263

I

THE THREE AT HOME



THE THREE AT HOME

THE strains of Beethoven's "Farewell to the Piano," beseeching, tender, filled the low-ceiled, roomy garret-place with peace. There was in the music, along with the beautiful melancholy of autumn, — the mood that looks back and remembers and grieves, — the wistful hope that is in a

Three of a Kind

spring day, as delicate as the green of willows beside a swollen stream in April. As Ludovic played, Phil paused now and then in his task of instructing the dog Dun to hold a newspaper in his mouth, while he stood erect on hind feet and danced, so it seemed, to the rhythmic bowing of the old musician.

Dun was as yet far from an adept at the game. Phil, with a bundle of papers under his arm, would offer one to the dog, who, dog-like, would snuff at it, his plastic tail expressive of pleasant expectation: and upon the discovery that it was neither food nor the still more coveted sweet would back away with a noticeable diminution of fervor, a sort of kindly reproach showing in all his body. The boy would then set him up again on his hind legs, a position to which Dun took with an amazed reluc-

The Three at Home

tance, and, forcing open his teeth, place a newspaper between them; and then, moving a few feet back, aim a stern forefinger at the animal and speak this admonitory word: "Stand up and sell it, Dun, that's the dog:" whereupon Dun would gleefully respond by promptly resuming his four-footed position with a cheerful bark — and so lose his grip on the paper.

Tirelessly, at least on the part of the lad, was this routine gone through with: and again and again would the small black cocker drop the paper and run to where Ludovic bent over his violin, throw back his head and howl in unison with the instrument; sensitive, it would appear, to the tune, — whether pleasantly or the reverse was not for the casual observer to say. Then would Phil call him back to his practice, and

Three of a Kind

the manoeuvre, evidently utilitarian in its purpose, be resumed, much to the discomfiture of Dun, who, with a soul attuned to the great master, ill-brooked so mundane a discipline as that set by newsboy Phil. But the dog loved the boy, and the reward of a stroking hand on his ear, or a much delectated chocolate drop, was enough to put him instantly in high good humor: testified to by sparkling brown eyes and fairly vocal tail; surely, the poet's words,

“Something sweet in the mouth
Makes all things sweet for a boy,”

applies with equal force to his canine companion.

The afternoon shadows lengthened among the trees of the old graveyard across the way, upon which their dormer window looked: and the softened light, a

The Three at Home

light that seemed to emphasize the higher values of life, touched the old, worn furniture of the room to a certain poetry and dignity. It was no common room this, you felt on entering it. The eye rested with surprise and pleasure on the wainscoted walls, the smooth old oak of the floor, the dark rafters above which gave almost a baronial suggestion to the quarters. The meddling philanthropy which might climb these stairs ran the risk of disappointment on entering such a habitation, humble as it seemed: only the social bore or barbarian could have patronized it as the haunt of the "worthy poor," — though it was at the top of several panting flights of stairs, innocent of an elevator. It was because the occupants were so high, perhaps, that the rent was so accommodatingly low.

Three of a Kind

With quiet satisfaction, too, the eye might note the quaint corner lowboy, into whose drawers were crammed the music compositions accumulated through long years by Ludovic; the centre table of oak grown black with time, the legs curiously carved into writhen shapes resembling the gargoyles of mediaeval cathedrals, — the board from which they partook of their daily meals; there was the curtained recess opposite the window, behind which, among more miscellaneous treasures, was a choice collection of fiddles, the musician's extravagance — for he knew the inward and esoteric differences between an Amati and a Stradivarius, as you know the palm of your hand, and although such heirlooms and windfalls were, of course, far beyond him, he had gradually gathered together a little collection which contained instruments of

The Three at Home

genuine interest and value to the connoisseur.

Then there was the homely cozy-looking corner fire-place where, on this keen November afternoon, a deep red glow from the remains of a hard-wood fire sent forth a comfortable warmth and bathed the furnishings in a rich light. It was another of Ludovic's extravagances, this open fire: he had taken the apartment years before, though the rent had been for him excessive, allured by its possibilities for homely comfort; — chief among them the friendly fire, which is the eye of the house, even as the river is the eye of the landscape. A dominant feature of the room was the queer old screen, shutting off one corner. It was of Spanish leather, with a design that transported you at once to some ancient chapel-of-ease. Its use was multiple;

Three of a Kind

behind it were still other of the musician's precious plunder, bits and oddities he had acquired; and not only was it a convenient hiding place for the human members of the household, but it was the favorite retiring place also of the dog, whose tiny bit of carpet was spread there, and more in use than any prayer-rug out of the East.

Thus, although there were signs aplenty of straitened means, there was something indescribably picturesque in the colors and contours of this living-room; as the name implies, eminently livable it was, a place for homely human comradeship, a shelter fragrant with the incommunicable magic of love.

Three doors led from this main room: one to the outer hall, one to a small inner bed-room, and yet another giving on a tiny kitchen where the master of the

The Three at Home

little menage concocted wonderful dishes of German tradition; and whence odors of sauer-kraut and even Limburger penetrated to a protesting outer world at times. Looking at the house without, you saw that it had stood there in elder, better days, a testimonial to gentility: with its quietly dignified façade of red brick sobered down by time; its touches of white in door-sill and window-ledge; its air of neatness and retirement.

The street sloped downward from a hill once aristocratic, and at its lower end had been encroached upon by business interests, especially in the malodorous presence of livery stables, a fact resulting in the pleasantry which had given to that section of Chestnut Street the ambiguous name, Horse Chestnut. Lincoln's comment on the mighty difference between a horse chestnut and a chest-

Three of a Kind

nut horse seemed hardly applicable here.

Ludovic was the natural centre of this home. His fifty odd years had not quenched a kind of inalienable youthfulness which lay in the very turn of his head, the quick alert movements of his body, and the shifting coal-fire glow of his eye when excitement aroused him out of some music dream. To be sure, the once black hair, pushed back from a noble brow — he had the head of a true musician — was streaked with gray. No matter: Ludovic would never be old in the unhappy sense of the word; for the idealist remains a boy to the end, and a boy he still was, as he laid aside the instrument and chuckled to see Dun mastering the intricacies of the new game nor venturing foot to floor until a snap of Phil's finger and the rewarding caress gave him permission.

The Three at Home

“ Good, good, thou little hound,” he said, as he placed the violin lovingly in its black leather case and set it in its corner place: “ Thou wilt make our fortune yet, not? Phil’s and mine and thine: Du Lieber, but I must come to the street corner yet, and make music mit, or thou wilt never sell papers for the Kleine, — two babies thou art together.”

And Ludovic wagged his mane affectionately, as he disappeared into the inner chamber, to lay aside his velvet smoking-jacket and don a conventional long-tailed coat; in the which arrayed, he descended the three flights of stairs with a clatter of his stout foreign-looking shoes, on his way to the vaudeville house where, though it was Sunday, he must play the program of more or less cheap selections which was his nightly disci-

Three of a Kind

pline. He knew and revered the master composers of his native Germany, but for bread's sake he shared in the daily execution — how ominous and fit the word! — of the operative ephemera of the day. Once more in his comfortable garret room, it was his consolation to pour balm upon his bruised spirit by copious applications of Bach and Handel and Mendelssohn; above all, of Beethoven, his chief worship, whose headship over all the world of tone was the vital clause in his creed.

At first blush, you would have said they were very unlike, these three. What can be the resemblance between a German violinist, a newsboy and a cocker spaniel? Yet here was a confederation such as few states or other human associations can boast; three of a kind they were, in very truth. Love bound them

The Three at Home

each to each in the unity of the simple heart. And the manner of their coming together shall be told.

Ludovic was a North German, a native of Cassel. Music he had drunk in as a boy in that pretty little Hessian city, where his father had been a band-master: music was as much a part of him as bread and beer. Not to follow the same profession had never even occurred to his mind. Caught in the great stream of immigration which seemed to sing a song of hope to the hosts of the elder lands, he had come, long years before, to America, a young man with a happy knack at the fiddle, an honest open face under his wavy hair and, deep down in his heart, the desire to become rich and famed; but not for himself he wished it, ach, no — that he might send for Hilda, to join him in the great

Three of a Kind

new splendid country and be his bride.

He was getting on for old now, and Hilda had never come; he did not even know her fate; yet he was not unhappy. Music had been a faithful mistress, and his life, inconspicuous though it might be, brought him his full share of cheer and comfort. Only it was as if the original spring of action had been broken; the native resiliency was there still, but the motive for doing — that had been killed, long, long ago.

In those more prosperous times, he had been a member of a distinguished symphony orchestra, whose standing set a seal of ability on all its personnel; it was a place to which his talents naturally called him. He made no murmur that of late years his fate had turned dingier and brought him employment at the humbler playhouses. It was no diminu-

The Three at Home

tion of skill nor dimming of ideals that had wrought the change: a disagreement with his old leader over a technical point of interpretation; an unnecessary sticking to his side of the argument — and dismissal, — that was all. The essential trouble was that Ludovic was what is called unambitious; he who feeds on dreams is often careless as to his daily meat. He had even at times, under pressure, become a member of an itinerant street band, and in that capacity breathed a certain dignity into a trombone, nor been unhappy in such endeavor. It was a sign of delicate discrimination that he chose such an instrument. He could not have brought himself quite to use his beloved fiddle under such circumstances: perhaps, too, he recognized that the trombone, like the violin among the strings, is the one

Three of a Kind

wind instrument which runs the chromatic full scale — and so possesses wider and almost human possibilities of expression. Perhaps Ludovic too easily fell into that satisfaction with the private inner life, in which, for your true idealist, often lies the doom of what the world calls success. Food and drink enough to sustain life, a roof over his head, a few friends tried and true, — his fiddle and his dreams: *Lieber Herr Gott*, what would you more? “Not as the world loves, lovest thou me.” So Ludovic lived the life of the affections and was content: disillusionment with him, if indeed you can call it such, had no touch of cynicism or sour kicking against the pricks.

And why had not Hilda come? In agony had Ludovic asked himself that question years ago, before the kindly

'The Three at Home

passing of time had gentled the hot throbs of pain and blurred the keenness of the hurt. His letters had remained unanswered. No clue with her could be established. Inquiries of friends at Cassel had simply elicited the reply that the girl had suddenly disappeared, — as they had believed, to join him. Gradually the conviction had deepened in Ludovic's mind that his sweetheart had been lost at sea, one of the innumerable steerage passengers too humble and unknown to count in the blazonry of the daily press.

So he lived down his grief, hugged his violin to his breast, and went his simple way, his kind face more rugged, yet with a certain mellow quality that made friends for him among children and animals — and with mature folk whose hearts could respond to a purity like Galahad's. That face of his did not change into hard set

Three of a Kind

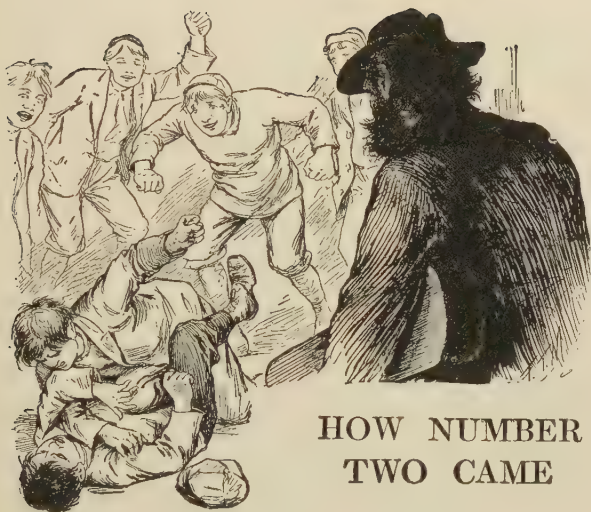
lines, cut by business cares and the fierce selfish competition for the so-called prizes of earth. Hilda — She was ein Engel im Himmel; he was here on earth, not without his comfort and joy: it was enough. And always there was music: a fugue of Bach, whose theme played hide and seek with Beauty; a barcarolle by Schumann, in which you felt the very motion of the waves, and smelt the eternal tang of the brine: a berceuse wherewith Chopin expressed for all time the mother love-longing and the sweet childly dependence in the cradle; a Beethoven symphony broad as life and uniting in one great harmony the discordant mysteries of fate. No, with such divine companions to attend his leisure hours, or sweeten his hours of work, Ludovic did not walk alone nor un comforted. Then, too, did he not have, for fellow farers

The Three at Home

along the same dusty highway, Phil, the newsboy, and Dun, the dog? And now we must hear of their coming to him and of the great love that sprang up between three of a kind.

II

HOW NUMBER TWO CAME



HOW NUMBER TWO CAME

LATE one night in autumn, a year before the tale opens, Ludovic, his orchestra work over, was on his way home, and passing through an alley that made a short cut from one thoroughfare to another, he paused a moment at the edge of the curb, to watch a noisy circle of street boys whose

Three of a Kind

vociferations rent the night air and accented the customary absence of a policeman. It was evident that the center, of which these youngsters formed the circumference, was reserved for one of those fisticuffs, impromptu or planned, which are the delight of unregenerate America in our cities. Yes, there they were, at it hammer and tongs, Ludovic saw as he drew near; a torch held in the hands of one of the leaders of the gang, threw shadows on the combatants: the group stood out in a chiaroscuro that only a Correggio might have matched; the musician felt the artistic values of the scene, but his sense of humanity was uppermost rather than his artistic sensibility. For something in the pose and personality of the younger of the two fighting boys moved his compassionate interest; although the

How Number Two Came

fellow stood his ground right sturdily, he was so much the smaller of the two that the match appeared cruelly unfair. His companions, indifferent to the inequality, jeered at him as he was worsted in an exchange of blows or a wrestling clinch: it is only in Sunday-school stories that such onlookers chivalrously espouse the cause of the under dog. The adolescent sense of justice in untutored young humanity is but in the egg, at the best.

But more than the sense of unfair play drew the musician towards the lad: the tumble of dark hair falling low over the right brow, and impatiently thrown aside by a quick jerk of the head; the clear oval of the cheek in which a belligerent red now flamed; more than all, the dog-like look of appeal in the fellow's eyes — so suggestive of fidelity, — these character-

Three of a Kind

istics for some reason moved Ludovic strangely: it was not that he knew the face and form, yet he felt drawn to the boy, — and as the battle grew fiercer apace, he finally made up his mind to interfere. A few firm words, not unkindly spoken, were enough:

“ You will stop, eh! You make me call the policeman — or that I fight this big bully myself, — ja? ” With a quick jerk of his collar he sent the larger lad spinning backward. Ludovic’s frame drawn to its full height through indignation, produced respect in itself: the leonine ring in his voice was unmistakable: apparently he could and would back up his speech by action. The circle melted away like magic at a hint of the authorities and in a few minutes the musician found himself walking toward the well-lighted avenue, his hand resting

How Number Two Came

fraternally upon the shoulder of his new friend.

“ It’s Phil they call me,” the latter panted out, in response to Ludovic’s question: “ I’m a newsboy. I could lick him, boss, if — if — ye hadn’t butted in.” He was half sobbing, half laughing, still hysterical with combat.

“ The gang was down on me, ’cos I beat ’em out selling specials de udder day, when dey was tryin’ to arrest John D., yer know.”

Something in that last *yer know*, a confiding note, accompanied with an upward glance that meant the sympathy of the listener was unhesitatingly assumed, won the other’s heart.

“ Tell me all of yourself, where you live, mit who ? ”

There was the ring of true liking in the tone — and it was not lost on the news-

Three of a Kind

boy. The sturdy little fellow's story — a story repeated in the case of thousands of such waifs who battle their way up into manhood or sink in the struggle where the odds are so terribly against them — was easily drawn out by the shaggy, kind, old violinist, with his half fatherly, half fraternal way. Phil responded readily to kindness — just as all mankind has ever responded to it, since in the annals of the aborigines the first hand reached out to another for a hearty grip and Godspeed.

He was alone in the world, he gossiped garrulously on: of his father and mother he knew or remembered naught. He sold papers for a living, with an occasional *détour* into boot blacking: he lived over a shop in a side street not far from the whizz of central traffic — a consideration in his business. Phil explained that he

How Number Two Came

“kept house,” looking up at his interlocutor with a smile that revealed very white teeth between red lips, winsome in spite of the fact that his upper lip was badly puffed and one eye fast growing dark around the edges. “Keeping house,” it appeared, was a euphuism: Phil hired a room where he fed himself, when he did not eat at some street stand or night hawk, or in one of the cheaper restaurants.

“It’s fine in the summer, when there’s lots of fruit and penny ice-cream in the stand at the corner — yum — yum! But it’s on the bum, winters — the landlord ain’t throwin’ any heat away,” and the boy’s shoulders humped themselves into a shiver involuntarily. It was cold now, where they stood, as the crisp autumn night moved toward the bleaker morning.

Three of a Kind

And as the young Arab of the city had talked on, more and more Ludovic had become interested, attracted. Before their walk was finished, all the suppressed paternalism of his nature seemed to surge up and over into a tenderness for the lad that was almost inexplicable, beyond analysis. He said good night with a strange reluctance.

A few days later he called on Phil in his room, saw its ugly comfortlessness and invited him to take pot luck for over Sunday in the cozy quarters under the eaves. Phil never went home again, save to tie his scant belongings into a bundle, and notify his landlord of his departure. He liked Ludovic, trusted him utterly, was glad of the companionship. His feeling for him was touched with awe because of the musician's gray locks and power with the bow; and too

How Number Two Came

the touch of the foreign about him. To Phil, the other's connection with the orchestra set Ludovic upon one of the thrones of the earth. Moreover, the boy had a natural love for music, and never tired of hearing the violinist play some of his favorite airs: "The Three Grenadiers," or the "Wacht am Rhein"; often singing the words, too, in a big, vibrant temperamental German voice, while the instrument fairly quivered with the pathos or power of the accompaniment.

Within a week the pair were as close to each other, as dear cronies, as if their relation had been established for years on end. It was a pleasant thought to Ludovic, as he would draw near to his lodging after the theater had emptied its patrons into the night, to know that a comrade awaited him; Phil might be asleep, to be sure, on the little iron bed-

Three of a Kind

stead which had been purchased expressly for him and set up in the inner room opposite to Ludovic's ampler bed; a room hitherto useless except for storing purposes but now converted into a bed chamber; for Ludovic had been content with a cot behind the screen. And, asleep or awake, the old musician knew he was there, and the thought made his bachelor quarters infinitely more like home.

Ludovic worked hard to interest Phil in good reading, and bought picture books of all kinds in order to lure the lad — to whom two winters of sporadic attendance upon a night school had imparted the elements of the three R's — into occupying himself happily of an evening instead of lawlessly roaming the streets. As a pedagogue no doubt the violinist left much to be desired: he was

How Number Two Came

no adept in child psychology and the very word "methodology" would have dazed him. But he recognized the good in the newsboy and loved him. Hence his instruction fell on fruitful soil. Before his coming, Phil, naturally enough, since he had but his unspeakable dreary room to go to, had spent his evenings mostly with other boys of his sort: in the gallery of some variety theater, if the day had been lucky and they "had the price;" or wandering in the alleys where mischief called unto its own. But with genuine interest and attraction at home, even though his friend the musician could not be there, Phil very willingly remained indoors after the evening meal. Man or boy, humanity follows the line of least resistance in such matters.

He would busy himself with books and

Three of a Kind

pictures, or mercantile calculations, — for the newsboy took much pride in his work and his first regular duty after the late supper was despatched — he must be at his stand in the city's heart during the hour of golden harvest between six and seven — was to reckon up the account of the day's takings and profits; which were then duly entered with the stub of a pencil in a much-thumbed and frankly dirty note-book.

Phil's pride in this vesper transaction passed all belief. In the first place, it was a practical demonstration of what he had learned at the night school; and secondly, it showed that he was steadily becoming a capitalist, which was as balm to his spirit. Regularly were his earnings passed over to Ludovic for safe keeping; and before they had been six months together, the increasing funds had led

How Number Two Came

Phil to think seriously of a savings bank; not the big ones whose cashiers go wrong, but the little iron ones with a slot to receive the coins and a squat look of inaccessibility to attack, and — a final touch lifting it, at a stroke, into a loftier type — a little door in the back actually opened by a bona-fide key, for the reception, it need not be said, of valuable papers or other securities altogether too large for the slit in front.

Up to the present, however, the boy had been well content to let these accumulations lie in a certain old carved box of German manufacture, one of Ludovic's treasures: an affair of dark, scented wood and many compartments, — just the receptacle for hidden gold or romantic secrets. Of a Sunday, it was his keenest indoor pleasure — yes, dear reader, keener, I regret to say, than any

Three of a Kind

church observance or other Godly exercise, — to get the box out and tumble its contents upon the floor. To see Phil on such an occasion, his bronze hair falling over the clear olive of his cheek as he sorted out the nickels, dimes and quarters into neat piles, and with many furrowings of the brow, made the additions necessary to a knowledge of the full sum of his earnings, would have stirred the desire of a painter of genre subjects. A Rembrandt would have called it the “The Boy Miser” (a great injustice to Phil) and crowds would have stood agape in a gallery before the picture. More than once (not without secret sighings at the reduction of the sum total) a quarter had been abstracted from the strong box of Phil’s mounting ambition, wherewith he purchased, as a special treat for his friend, — perhaps

How Number Two Came

some of the pumpernickel the German loved, or even the malodorous Limburger: these and other gastronomic dainties of the fatherland were temptingly displayed in the front window of a delicatessen shop around the corner. Phil, indeed, had well-nigh got the establishment into serious trouble by his generous donation of Limburger on one occasion. Ludovic, trembling with delight, had hung the delectable on the window-sill, and a limb of the law, scenting the fray from afar, had laboriously clumped up the stairs — he was like Hamlet, “fat and scant of breath” — to investigate the difficulty with the drain. Once aware of the cause, he had to the great discomfiture of the occupants, ordered the precious morsel removed:

“Yez can’t make a smell like that

Three of a Kind

public, — not in this town," he had declared solemnly, as his cumbersome blue form descended to the street.

To describe Phil's feeling for Ludovic, during this period of ever deepening intimacy, as adoration, is to talk in too pale colors of a sentiment so prismatic in its hues as to dazzle speech. The musician came to be for him at once model, protector, king; and the model was matchless, the protector all-powerful, the king could do no wrong.

Phil's sensitiveness to music was remarkable in view of his lack of training, the nomadic nature of his brief life previous to his joining forces with the old musician. Ludovic learned that, whereas Phil was unknown to him on the night of the rescue, he was by no means a stranger to the newsboy, who had often stood in the street to hear Ludovic play

How Number Two Came

at those times when the German had been an itinerant *Musiker* by day, instead of a member of the theater orchestra by night. On one occasion, Phil said, he had followed the street band from early in the morning until late in the afternoon, lured on by piece after piece, prevailingly martial in kind, as Ludovic ascertained by making the lad whistle snatches of the various airs. And during his practice hours in his room, the musician noticed with pleasure that the instinctive taste of his boy friend was excellent; although his mouth was dumb to tell why he liked a composition, he was apt to ask for those of the better sort, not the cheap trash in which Ludovic had to be *particeps criminis*, at the theater. Phil had an *argot* all his own in indicating his preferences.

“Give us de tune wid de twinkle,” he

Three of a Kind

would say, and the German had come to recognize this as a graceful trifle of Gillet's called "Loin du bal." Or it would be, "How about de one with de stiff in it, Luddy?" And Ludovic's response with Chopin's Funeral March was automatic. "De piece where dey break furniture and then sing fine to cover up de noise, see?" was his offhand description of a selection from the Niebelungen played in the public park one Sunday.

But if language lacked, the fundamental appreciation was there; it showed in the naive queries the boy showered upon Ludovic, by the heightened color and even the moist eye — tell-tale signs of which Phil was heartily ashamed and would have denied, had they been charged to him withal. Waif that he was, wee fragment of the city's flotsam, he had been dowered with a nature attuned to

How Number Two Came

those high harmonies which, above all other ways of beauty, seem to bring heaven momentarily nearest to the workaday earth whereon we tread. Familiarity with the best would do wonders with such a soul. This Ludovic knew and knew also that the music gift, like many a gift other, has naught to do with culture, place nor fortune, much as such incidentals may do to help it. So he strove to develop Phil's dormant sensibilities so far as in his power lay, by talking commonly of the affairs and interests of the music world, and taking pains to instruct him in the simpler essentials of the art: the notes of the scale, the elementary names of the music score and the like.

It was a sight not without its pathos to see little Phil, under instruction, force his clumsy gamin hands to pick the strings

Three of a Kind

of an old violin which the musician placed in his arms, bidding him imitate his master in the correct position, the bowing and the production of a full tone. Progress was slow, for the practice had to be confined mostly to Sundays; but the flushed face and eager eyes of the pupil were a warrant of his set purpose to make the accomplishment his own in the end, and Ludovic showed an infinite gentle patience in his teaching.

“Thou wilt be a *Meister* yet,” he would say playfully, by way of encouragement; “a little master, I shall call you.”

And the lad, picking up the word, called the musician “big master” in return; and the affectionate epithets became of familiar use between them.

When Phil would stop, tired out and discouraged, maybe, he would get his reward in the beautiful melodies the

How Number Two Came

other evoked from the sounding-board, which seemed suddenly like an Aladdin's cave of tone treasures, pouring forth fair flocks and companies of dreams, until the homely garret place widened into some stately pleasure palace of storied history, of which they two alone had the freedom, in which they sat rejoicing with the joy of the elect.

It was a sort of shock — a too sudden return to mundane realities — when Ludovic at last must cease playing and cry out in his sonorous voice, with its tinge of foreign accent:

“ See, now, bübchen, 'tis eleven of the clock and we must to bed go. Ein glass beer, and then lights out.”

Whereupon Phil, with the music daze still on him, might have been seen to arise and busy himself with emptying a bottle of Pabst, kept religiously outside the

Three of a Kind

window for coolness' sake, into a stein of noble proportions which stood upon the mantel shelf over the fire place, along with sundry other similar reminders of the favorite beverage of Deutschland. Ludovic had the true German disdain for a mere glass as a receptacle wherefrom to quaff his best-loved tippie. He would have found himself in hearty agreement with Mr. Richard Swiveller, upon the classic occasion when that gentleman declared to the Marchioness that beer couldn't "be tasted in sips." Ludovic's evening drink was, with him, as with all idealists and artist souls, a sort of social sacrament, and the stein, which with its motto in German script, and its picture of a group of good fellows, served by the jolliest of fraüleins, carried the suggestion of an immemorial host of boon companions who had drunk of its

How Number Two Came

comfortable contents, was an indispensable adjunct to his enjoyment.

And so, in the whole big, busy selfish city, there could scarce be found a pair of friends closer bound or more all-sufficient to each other than Ludovic the musician and Phil the newsboy. And yet they were to learn, through the coming of a third comrade, that their domestic felicity still failed of the full happiness destined to be their own.

III
THE COMING OF NUMBER
THREE



THE COMING OF NUMBER THREE

THE coming of the dog Dun was in this wise. One day, in the bleak white of midwinter, Phil was standing at a particularly wind-swept corner, a cross-way of traffic where the sale of newspapers to home-returning toilers was keenest after five o'clock in the afternoon. He was cry-

Three of a Kind

ing in his clear treble and with the phonetics peculiar to his craft: "Here y're, Evenin' Post, Extry: Tribiyune, all about the big fire: I-talian earthquake, five hundred swallowed up alive."

In the dream of world peace which to-day sets a few prescient souls aflame, I wonder if they include a kind of peace, less martial yet equally desirable: that which begins at home and means that our daily prints can be hawked with the same profit without raucous-voiced newsboys fouling the air with their cries of lust, murder and sudden disaster — just the sort of thing from which poor humanity would flee when it goes forth of a morning fresh from sleep and with hope at heart, or as it goes home to rest and take comfort after the strain of the working hours?

Think of the relief, the joy, of hearing

The Coming of Number Three

such corner calls as these: "Here y're! Restoration of kidnapped boy! Just out! Special: Millionaire's gift to the blind! Big sensation: Honest thief in State's Prison! Extry: Hero saves a railroad train!" Really, when you stop to think of it, there are a lot of dramatic occurrences in a day, doings which are neither grim nor terrible: acts that encourage humanity in the triumphal march towards better things. Mayhap the day will come when we shall no longer be asked to breakfast with disaster and sup on horrors. Meanwhile, the yellow journal feeds itself fat on such food; which is where it differs from a yellow dog.

Suddenly, at Phil's feet stood a little animal looking up at him in utter friendliness, the eye a-yearn as only a dog's can, the tail supplementing the eye-speech

Three of a Kind

with no less eloquence of love. It seemed a telepathic recognition, an unprecedented offer of brotherhood. The fine silky, black hair of the brute (how one hates to use the word where Love is), a cocker spaniel, by breed, was wofully bemired, his feathers drooped disconsolate. But his whole bearing was gay, not dejected: the very spirit of the light-foot comrade shone forth from his entire personality. Moreover, his points, although obscured by his present plight, were aristocratic for the knowing eye. So he stood gazing up at the lad, barking now and again to attract attention, if Phil's business cares took his eye from this new friend. It was as if the dog said in so many words: " I like you, I need you ; make me yours and all will be well."

And it was evident that this appeal was not made piteously, but as man to man,

The Coming of Number Three

because of an instant perception in the canine mind that here was a fellow after his own heart. In the big world of humans, these sudden likings are common enough. Some of us even believe in love at first sight, — or if we don't, our children do, and act accordingly, much to our alarm. Why then, forsooth, should we not allow the same privilege to animals, whose instincts take the place of our boasted reasoning faculties and not seldom make those faculties look slow and blundering? Half the romance of history begins thus, with the chance meeting of strangers at the cross-ways of Life.

There was nothing to mark ownership in the dog; no collar adorned his neck, nor were there signs of gentle care in his keeping. Yet, as we said, Nature had made him a beautiful creature: with his

Three of a Kind

luxuriant soft thick coat, handsomely feathered, with the slender snout esteemed of fanciers, and with animation and ease in all his movements; and with the crowning gift and grace of rich brown eyes, which now, seeking Phil's, held a pleading that was well-nigh irresistible. Phil took him to be homeless, or lost, at any rate, in the devious paths of the city, in that section of it where ancient cow-paths and tortuous lanes have resulted in a down-town tangle, apt to confuse even the superior intellect of man.

This cocker had a way of looking up at you, head perked a little to one side, one ear drooping properly forward but the other turned coquettishly back, and with an arch, quizzical expression of countenance which had all the effect of a keen appreciation of the humors of life; and was potent to draw out affection



THE DOG SHOWED NOT THE SLIGHTEST INTENTION OF
DEPARTURE.

[Page 57.]

The Coming of Number Three

in every one save those unfortunates condemned by an inscrutable fate to indifference toward man's best friend among brute kind. He took that pose now, and Phil was a ready victim. Young as he was, he could feel in a vague way the pathos of being a dumb outcast in a great city, — indeed, had not Phil himself been very much in the same boat? And his soul, all unknowingly, also responded to an exhibition of pluck in taking such a sorry lot debonnairely: Phil was no immune from the contagion of courage.

As trade slackened and the bunch of papers melted away, he pondered the proper action and made wrong change to his mortification several times, because of his absent-mindedness. The dog showed not the slightest intention of departure; it was plain he intended to stick to this self-elected master; he was the

Three of a Kind

very figure of constancy in action. When, at last, the boy turned his face toward the lane that gave on the old graveyard, the canine trotted obediently after, unre-pulsed, without so much as a whistle to bring him to heel. His carriage implied there had been a close relation between the two from time out of mind. Now and again he would bound ahead of the boy, looking back with the light of an expectant gratitude in those leal brown eyes. He seemed to rebuke the other for his slow progress. When he trotted more sedately just ahead of the boy (satisfied that the other would follow), there was something both appealing and comic in his gait. The forward movement of a small dog is for all the world like that of a side-paddle steamer going transverse to the current.

Yet Phil made short work of the mile

The Coming of Number Three

between him and supper. Not only did hunger impel him, he had, too, the additional incentive of the surprise to the master. Truth to tell, his query was not unmingled with a mild alarm. He knew Ludovic liked animals of all sorts. Had he not one day, before Phil's very eyes, rescued a wretched gutter cat from the machinations of a gang of urchins who were striving to make a practical demonstration of the proverb which declares that animal to be possessed of nine lives: apparently meaning nine times the usual chance for torture? And in some of their suburban journeyings he had noticed the old musician's gentle delight in those merry little wights, the birds: a joy which might have reminded Phil of St. Francis of Assisi, had the former been a literary man instead of a newsboy whose handsome face was not

Three of a Kind

always perfectly clean, and whose hands never were. Still, Ludovic might not take an immediate, violent fancy to the little black cocker, which already, by its frank and affectionate demeanour, was winning its way into Phil's too fond heart.

But the fears were groundless. As the twain entered the living room, after a stair-climb in which the dog boldly led the way, as if he, not the boy, were mine host, the animal rushed toward Ludovic, seated in his corner, with an assurance of kindly welcome no less pathetic than sublime. And the musician, after the first moment of amazement taking in the situation at once, made a mock heroic gesture of despair and exclaimed with a comical moue: "It is a hound, yes — and I am his long lost father, eh? And thou art his brother, Phil, nicht? See,

The Coming of Number Three

he smells the stew.—He must eat yet, before he go ! ”

But of course he never went. The two comrades were an easy prey to the blandishments of the third, who by morning — for it would have been cruelty undreamt of to turn him out that night -- had so ingratiated himself into their affections that they made excuses to each other for keeping him day by day ; knowing all the while in their guilty hearts that he already belonged, as much as they themselves. Until finally, throwing aside all pretence, they shamelessly organized themselves into the trinity of the top floor.

His name had been a matter of some concern. You will have observed that Dun was not dun-colored. Nay, on the contrary, there was theatrical history in his cognomen. Phil, with the delicacy

Three of a Kind

of a true gentleman, waived the right of discovery and insisted on Ludovic as the proper baptismal authority. Now, the musician had once played in an orchestra where he had witnessed the performance of the elder Sothern as Lord Dundreary, — one of the pleasant memories of the older theater goers of this land. He had laughed, as have most of us who are past forty, at the peculiar little skip which the actor introduced, at first by accident in a rehearsal, into the walk of the funny fop, — to the huge content of his audience. One day Ludovic observed that the dog, busily threading the way in front of them on a Sunday outing, feet a-twinkle, skipped a step with one of his hind legs; instantly, Sothern flashed upon his amused mind; the resemblance threw him into Jovian laughter. So then and there, *Dundreary* was the animal dubbed.

The Coming of Number Three

And this, after the immemorial usage in respect of names, was reduced to Dun, — and accepted gratefully by all concerned.

And most kindly did Dun, now once and for all reclaimed from the ranks of the vagrants, take to his new life. There is in the cocker nature (as contrasted with other breeds) an extra share of the nomadic instinct, the *Wanderlust* of all free farers after joy. Hence, dearly he loved his days in the street. Even when masterless and unsure of his next meal, he had enjoyed them; but now, with fire and food and friends — another of the world's sweet trinities — to greet him at the day's end, his mood was beatific. What bliss unalloyed to dodge vehicles, bark up alleys, touch noses with stranger dogs, and always follow, follow, follow after at the beck of the Two, in the camaraderie of a common zest for life.

Three of a Kind

Dogs when happy are perfectly happy: and even when things go against them, they assume the best and keep up a cheerful attitude towards life: they are the first Christian Scientists in history.

Two distinct duties were his: on the one hand, he would help Phil sell his papers — for within a month he was so trained that he surprised and delighted gaping crowds of folks at Phil's corner by his antics and was a source of much revenue to the newsboy. Or again, he would trot beside Ludovic through the residential avenues, perch near while the musician played and, tin cup in mouth, gather coppers when the music ceased: and during its production, do his full share toward the securing of orchestral effects.

This last statement is no mere trope of speech, for Dun literally assisted the

The Coming of Number Three

musicians in their work; it is quite accurate to describe him as a musical dog. He always co-operated in the performance of the various selections. Seated close beside Ludovic, he would lift up his head, look languishingly to heaven, and emit sounds which, if they were not mellifluous, certainly implied emotion on his part, and moreover, were fully as efficacious in the bringing in of money, thrown from the windows or drawn from the pockets of passers-by, as were the concerted efforts of the remaining members of the band. Even as Orpheus lured wild animals to follow him by his sweet pipings, so did this tame animal lure human beings.

Sometimes, in his excitement, Dun would rise from his sitting posture and stand on his hind legs — the very attitude he was to assume later in the day

Three of a Kind

when a vendor of newspapers in the service of Phil. This, however, was when the selection was of a particularly sad, lacrymosal sort. For it is to be remarked that the manner of Dun's singing — it could be called naught else — and his general deportment, varied according to the style of composition. Yes, he seemed susceptible not only to pitch, intensity and tempo, but to the more subjective and subtle elements which have to do with harmony, sentiment, theme. A brisk merry dance tune, running from violin to flute like a wind in a wheat field (this street band boasted both brass and wood wind instruments), would draw from him a succession of short, staccato yelps, as he lay on his belly with head erect: to a mournful, slow-moving melody he would respond by long-drawn-out plaintive whines, perhaps with head between

The Coming of Number Three

his paws; while the crashing close harmonies of a composer like Wagner would bring him in a trice to his feet, tail and head pointing, the whole body tense and vibrant, and making noise enough to rival the music — almost.

To the uninstructed, this might seem like angry protest against the music of the future; but Ludovic knew, from many private experiments at home, that Dun was in truth a firm adherent of the Wagnerian school, a creature not to be scared off even by the extremes of a Richard Strauss. There is work yet to do, by the by, for our laboratory psychologists in the study of the musical sensitiveness of the lower orders of sentient beings.

Six months after Dun's adoption, he was as firmly lodged in the affections of his two friends as if he had been always

Three of a Kind

by their side. All their plans and pleasures included him; and in return for such feeling the dog gave them a devotion which, this side of heaven, they were unlikely to receive again. For often in the unquestioning fealty of those we mis-call brutes, is to be found a not unworthy foreglimpse of that final love which, our best moments whisper, shall pilot this blundering old world to a safe haven at last: that spirit in whose loving kindness, as Dante has sung it, we are ever fain to find our peace.

IV
SUNDAY AFIELD



SUNDAY AFIELD

THE roof-top trinity were wont to go of a Sunday out into one of the beautiful suburbs of the city, there to spend the sunshine hours beyond the "man-stifled town." In May, when the tender spring made a magic of early green on the trees and the revel of blossoms was near; in the full flush of midsummer, regal with

Three of a Kind

her brilliances and blooms; or on some splendid autumn day when the sparkling air was like a draught of golden wine and the country-side glowed with rich harmonies of reds and yellows, purples and browns, — you might have seen the three friends fare forth from their lodging and seek the open. By railroad train they went, or crowded trolley, or, best of all, travelled afoot after the manner of those who, above all else, love the beck of the long, white road.

To Phil this week-end holiday was joy supreme; all healthy-natured lads love the freedom of the fields. Ludovic, with his poet's nature, basked in the wide sun-warmed places of God; while as for Dun, it was a veritable heaven he found among the reaches of park and wood and meadow. One of the finest things this side the grave, is to see a dog enjoy that

Sunday Afield

“great good place, outdoors.” His infectious exuberance of high spirits is a winsome characteristic, in perfect key with his surroundings. It is really thrilling to behold a young dog racing about in sheer abandon of strength and heyday of blood, daring you to a race, now a speck in the distance through arrow-swift flight, yet darting back to your side as sure as the stone drops to earth or tides lift to the wooing moon. His attitude towards all things, as he sweeps along or pauses panting for a moment before resuming his mad run, is the very epitome of that unspoiled spontaneous interest in the created universe which makes life worth while. To doubt the “joy of living” from the dog’s point of view, under such conditions, were inconceivable. Things are good enough, he opines, and he has the immense common sense to

Three of a Kind

grasp all they offer and not worry ahead.

Ludovic would take his violin along at such times, not for professional reasons, but for the pure love of it. In fact, all professionalism was banished on these Sunday outings, by common consent. Phil might have picked up many a silver piece had he chosen to sell papers or exhibit the antics of the cocker; but even Dun seemed to catch the spirit that animated the day and was never the trick dog — but just a natural, happy quadruped, with room to run wild in and a whole, long, splendid day in which to disport himself in the open air. Happiness fairly oozed from all his body when, in the early Sabbath morning, the weather being fine, he recognized the usual preparations for an excursion: the living-room hardly held his leaps and his cries of exultation.

Sunday Afield

O how the three did enjoy these little excursions, even as did thousands more of the toilers of the town ! It is sometimes said that only the city-bred, the folk who are subtle and sophisticate, truly appreciate the beauties of nature. Like most generalizations, this is too sweeping and therefore untrustworthy. It may be true that farmers, as a rule, care little for scenery and have a habit of so building their barn as to obstruct the superb view from the front piazza — if so be they have a piazza at all. And it is undeniable that the better-class denizen of towns, has, of late years, brought new eyes and a new value to the country-side. Nevertheless, many humble folk, who make up humanity's rank and file, love the country and in their dumb way respond to the manifold lures of it beyond city limits. They cannot talk about it, to be sure, in

Three of a Kind

the terms of art, or with the finesse of literary culture: yet perhaps none the less does it nourish their spirit and is a joy often sought. If you are dubious, watch the disposition of their time by the masses in a great city on a fair-weather Sabbath in the right season. It is more than peep-shows that takes them thus afield, peopling the parks, surging to the sea-resorts, dotting bits of water with their pleasure boats and roaming forest ways.

On this keen, brilliant day in late October, of the year following Phil's coming, they had started bright and early for one of the outlying parks. It was magic weather: all glitter and bronze and gold. The smell of burning leaves (when once you were without the city) was heavy in the air, breeding a misty thought of immemorial camp-fires.

Sunday Afield

Myriads of leaves fell with a crinkly sound curiously like the spurtles of a wood fire, if you did but listen more than carelessly and had the trick of remembering. To breathe deep was to taste the primary joy of living.

In a little black knapsack slung foreign fashion over Ludovic's broad shoulders, was their luncheon; Phil carried in his pocket a small steel chain, which — though to do the dog justice, very seldom — it was sometimes necessary to slip on to Dun's collar amidst the alien excitement of outdoors. The inevitable fiddle case was tucked under the musician's arm. They were heading for a quiet part of the park, where was a broad stretch of sward, tapering down to a large pond (or little lake, as esthetes preferred to call it), the background set in fine oak trees, now superb in their

Three of a Kind

autumn changes. The garish attractions of merry-go-rounds and swan boats were not too near, and the three had chosen it for its comparative seclusion.

Phil and the master had ensconced themselves comfortably under a big tree: Dun came and went as mood dictated and external incitations too alluringly arose: a squirrel to be chased, a passing stranger to investigate, butterflies to follow in their tortuous aeries, nuts dropping from far above out of mysterious branches to dodge, — or a delicious roll in the still green grass, belly up and legs a-wriggle in a spasm of pure earthly bliss.

Ludovic drew from his pocket a little book; the boy, leaning against the mottled bole of a beech, settled himself to listen. It was the violinist's habit, on these occasions, to translate out of the German in his own way for his com-

Sunday Afield

panion's benefit one of Grimm's Märchen — a style of literature which he had discovered, by accident, was most agreeable to the lad, and one he himself adored. After the impromptu English rendering, it became Phil's task to give the tale in his own vernacular. To have used one of the excellent English translations of the fairy tales already existing, Ludovic would have deemed next door to sacrilege; most reverently did he interpret, with the original firmly grasped in hand. In this course of popular education, they had reached the highly instructional story of "Frau Holle."

The copy from which he read was fitted to evoke the proper mood in which those greatest of all tellers of folk-tales, the Brothers Grimm, should be enjoyed. It was a tiny volume, bound in yellow and red boards and with a highly colored

Three of a Kind

picture cover after the German fashion: one looked at a lovely sylph with blue-tipped wings sitting beside a mystic Lake (fancy not using a capital!), behind which rose beetling crags, crowned with a mediæval castle. Companions at her side were a swan which wore a crown, and a doe with a blue ribbon about its neck. Surrounding the group, a vignette of fairy creatures, animal or human, heightened the suggestion of the lore within.

Many a year before, in the fatherland, had Ludovic acquired this book, and it was much thumbed, its stories dimmed by time and use; but all the more dearly prized: one of those beloved pocket volumes which become more intimately a part of personal life than the very clothes one wears.

And now the old musician read aloud

Sunday Afield

in his rich, sympathetic voice, with its tinge of another land: an ideal medium through which to convey the sentiment of what he read, an imaginative handling of child life. Perhaps part of the reason why Ludovic eschewed an English version in indoctrinating Phil into the riches of German fable, lay in a secret pride in his ability thus to draw from the treasure-house of his native literature, in a manner to enthrall his audience of two; yes, two, since even Dun gave token of attention and ceased from troubling, momentarily, while Ludovic translated. The cynic might have declared he slept, but the cynic is always wrong.

“This is the story of Frau Holle, my Phil,” he began; “listen how it fell.

“A widow had two daughters; thereof one was beautiful and industrious, the other hateful and lazy. But she held the

Three of a Kind

hateful, lazy one far liefer, since she was her true daughter; so the other must all the work do, and be the hearth scrubber in the haus. The poor maiden must sit beside a well daily in the great highway and must so much 'spin', that the blood from her finger fell down. Now it happened, that the spindle was once all bloody, so she bent down to the well and would wash it away; but it sprung out of her hand and fell down into the water. She wept and ran to her stepmother and told her the unluck. Stepmother blamed her heartily and was so — " the translator hesitated — "so unpitcous as to say: 'If thou hast let the spindle fall into the water, go fetch it out again!'

"Then went the maiden to the well, and knew not what to do, and in her heart's anguish she leapt down into the well, for to fetch the spindle. She lost her senses

Sunday Afield

and when she came to herself again, she was in a beautiful meadow; there shone the sun and there were many tausend blooms. On the meadow, back and forth, went a bake-oven which was full of bread; and the bread cried out: ‘ach, draw me out, draw me out, otherwise I shall burn. I am already for some time well-baked.’

“So she took hold of the bread-spoon *oder*, that is, shovel, and fetched it all out. Thereafter went she further, and came to a tree, which hung full of apples and called to her: ‘Ach, shake us, shake us, we apples are altogether ripe.’

“So she shook the tree, so that the apples fell as if it rained apples, and shook so long, until no more were up above. And when she had laid them together in a heap, went she further on the way. At the end, she came to a little

Three of a Kind

haus, from which beckoned an old lady; but because she such great teeth had, the maiden was scared and wished to run away. But the old woman called after her: ‘Why fearest thou me, dear child? Stay with me, and if thou wilt do all work in the haus orderly, then it shall go well with thee; only thou must take heed that thou makest my bed with care and givest it a good shaking so that the feathers fly: then snows it in the world. I am Mother Holle.’ ”

“What did she mean?” interrupted Phil, who had been dreamily flipping bits of stick at Dun, his whole soul absorbed in the tale; “could de lady turn on and off the snow, — like you do the water faucet?”

“She was a sort of a goddess,” explained Ludovic, slowly; “what dey call a pagan deity; and she had charge of

Sunday Afield

the weather and crops and all growing things, — so the peasants, they loved her, and wished friendly with her. Yes,” the musician’s eyes grew dark, and looked far away across the green and gold of the park, — “in my native Hesse we used to say yet: ‘When it snows, Frau Holle, she makes her bed.’”

Phil made no reply; he seemed satisfied.

“Because the old woman spoke so kind to her,” Ludovic resumed, with a quaver in his voice, “the maiden took heart and agreed to enter into her service. She did all to her mistress’ content, and shook up her bed so hard that the feathers flew about like snowflakes: hence she lived a pleasant life there, with no cross words and plenty to eat all day along.

“Now she had been a long while with Frau Holle and then she became sad,

Three. of a Kind

and knew herself at first not what ailed her; but at last she saw it was *Heimweh* -- *das heisst*, homesickness," explained the translator; "and although it was here a thousand times better than at home, yet had she a longing thither. At last she said to her mistress: 'The home-sorrow tortures me, and although it goes so good with me here, yet can I not longer stay, I must go back again to my own.' Frau Holle said:

" 'It pleases me that thou desirest to go home, and since thou hast served me so true, I will myself bring you up there. So she took her by the hand and led her to a great gateway. The gate opened and just as she was passing through there fell a fierce rain of gold and all the gold remained hanging upon her, so that she was covered with it over and over again. 'That shalt thou have, for that thou hast

Sunday Afield

been industrious,' cried Frau Holle, and also gave her the spindle back, which had fallen into the well. Then the gate closed and the maiden found herself above in the world again, not far from her mother's haus."

"Stepmother, you mean, ain't it?" asked Phil; evidently he was letting nothing escape him.

"Ja, ja, but the Herren Grimm, they say just 'mother' here," replied Ludovic; "perhaps she seemed like she was her own mother for a minute, *verstehst du*, because the little girl was so glad she was back, nicht?"

Once more Phil seemed satisfied and the recital went on:

"And as she came into the yard, a cock sat by the wall and cried:

‘Cock - a - doodle - do !

Our girl's come back, all golden too !’

Three of a Kind

Then she went in to her mother — ” Phil let it go this time — “ and since she was all gold bedecked, she was right well welcomed by her, and by her sister.

“ The maiden told all that had happed, and when the mother heard in what wise she had got great riches, she would have the other and lazy daughter fare in the same fashion. She, too, must seat herself by the well and spin: and that the spindle might be bloody, she pricked her finger and thrust her hand into the thorn-hedge. Then she threw the spindle into the well and sprang in after it. So she came, like the other, upon the beautiful meadow and went along the self-same path. When she fell in with the bake-oven, shrieked the bread again: ‘ Ach, draw me out, draw me out, or I shall burn, I have been so long a-baking.’ But the lazy one answered, ‘ I’m not going to dirty myself

Sunday Afield

for you, stay there till you be black,' and went on. Soon came she to the apple tree, which cried out, 'O shake me, shake me, we apples are altogether ripe.' But she answered: 'A nice way to talk, you might fall on my head,' and went along. When she came to Frau Holle's haus, she was not afraid; for she had heard about the big teeth already, — and so entered into her service. The first day she worked hard, was industrious, and when Frau Holle told her anything, took heed, for she kept thinking of the gold she would give her. But on the second day, she began to be lazy, on the third still more so, and next day, she did not want to get up. She failed to make her mistress' bed, which her duty was, and did not shake it so that the feathers flew. So Frau Holle soon wearied of her and declared her service ended.

Three of a Kind

“The wench was well pleased and be-thought her: ‘Now the rain of gold will begin.’ Mother Holle led her also to the gateway and when she stood there, instead of the gold, a big kettle full of pitch was shaken over her.

“‘That to pay for your service!’ said Frau Holle and banged to the door. Then the lazy mädchen came home and was all covered with pitch, and when the cock by the well saw her, he cried:

‘Cock - a - doodle - do !

Our dirty daughter has come back too !’

and the pitch stayed on her, and so long as she lived, would not off.”

There was a pause after Ludovic finished his translation. Dun, I regret to say, had not shown the interest to be expected in the denouement, and his form, dimmed by distance, was to be seen on

Sunday Afield

the borders of the lake, where he gamboled with some small children; perhaps he had objected to the too obvious moral of the tale and felt in his heart that there were others in the world dirty besides the lazy daughter.

At last the musician spoke: "Well, mein liebe Phil! how like you the märchen?"

Phil grinned reflectively.

"O, pretty good. I like some of them stories about fighting, and bears and o-gres and robbers better. Old Mammy Holle handed the lemon to lazy one all right, didn't she? I wish somebody would plaster me all over with gold like that; you bet, I'd get busy, all right, all right. No more windy corners in winter for little Phillie."

"*Ja wohl*, thou rascal boy," said the other amiably. "But come now, speak

Three of a Kind

the story in thy own words.” He smiled encouragement.

Phil puckered his brow a bit and then began :

“ Well, dere was a widder woman what had two daughters; one of ’em was pretty, all right, but the other nit; she wouldn’t work a little bit. But, you see, she was her own girl, so she had the widder woman dead to rights. T’other girl, the good one, used to sit by a well and sew to beat the band, and one day she pricked her finger and got it bloody and washed it off in the water. But the — the spindle what she spicled with, dropt in, and then the girl sprinted to the widder and give her an earful ’bout how it happened; and the mother-in-law — ”

“ Nay, spitzbubel, *das heisst* step-mother,” interpolated Ludovic.

“ That’s right, the stepmother,” — Phil

Sunday Afield

accepted the correction with due meekness — “ she was hot, and sent the girl back to dive for the blamed old spindle — Huh ! think of all that fuss over nothin’ ! ” meditated Phil.

“ So the nice daughter took a swim and then, first thing she knew she didn’t know nothin’; then she woke up and it was a fine medder — somethin’ like this, all flowers and the sun a-shinin’: it might have been Sunday, — I dunno. And they was baking bread — mighty queer place for a kitchen, too. Well, anyway, the bread in the oven ups and says: ‘ Get a move on you, ’cos I’m burning up.’ So she takes it out. Then she sprinted some more and came to a apple tree — I’d like to take a whack at that myself,” was Phil’s marginal comment.

“ And says the apples, ‘ Give us a shake, for we’re pretty near rotten.’ So

Three of a Kind

she shakes 'em all down and piles 'em up, and then, her for the race track again. After a while she treks up to a house, and an old lady says *come here* with her hand; but she flashed so many store teeth that the girl got leery and 'was' going to do a hundred yard dash; but the old woman told her, 'Aw, I'm all right; you hire out to me and we'll get on fine; but you'll have to shake all the feathers out of my bed, so the folks'll think it's snowing!

"It would look kinder like that, wouldn't it, big master?" The boy again brought his latter-day realistic vision to bear upon the magic law of myth.

"*Ganz sicher* — sure, it would," responded his friend.

"Well, so they made a deal, and the girl made good. What was her name? It don't say, does it?" suddenly queried

Sunday Afield

Phil, the thought striking him that a nameless heroine was an anomaly in fiction.

“ She was just *ein Mädchen*, a gut girl, like all good girls are,” explained Ludovic, with an impressive air of wisdom.

“ Well, anyway, she made snow-storms with the bed and had the time of her life eatin’ and sleepin’ and standin’ in with the old Dame. Then after a while she took sick — homesick, they call it,” — it was a disease that waif Phil had escaped in his brief existence. “ So she says to the lady: ‘ Me for mother-in — ’ I mean ‘ stepmother.’ I should think she’d rather have stayed with the Holley lady,” mused Phil, “ like I’d rather stay with you than do the lonesome act; no use going home to stepmother; she was a kind of near-mother, warn’t she ?

“ Anyway, it suited the old woman what

Three of a Kind

hired her all right, so she took her to a gateway, and just as she was going through the gold came down and slathered her all over. And bang! the door went and the stage went dark, and she was back near her mother's, — naw, 'naw, her step-mother's house. And in she goes into the yard and there was a rooster that handed some dope 'bout bein' glad she was back and her folks was glad to see her 'cos she had the boodle. They didn't care nothin' 'bout her really, see?

“Then she told 'em her story and the old girl was dead anxious to have Girlie Number Two try the gold cure. So she did the well stunt and got into the medder; but say, she wasn't goin' to fool with bread and apples; no sir; they wasn't high-life enough for her. So she just let 'em holler. And when she hired out to the Holley dame, she earned her salary

Sunday Afield

'bout two days and a half, then laid down on her job. So old Mother Holley called the deal off. This was just like findin' money to Miss Lazy, so she stood by the gateway and shut her eyes for to let the gold fall on her. Gee! but she was the limit for gall! But did it fall? I don't think. Naw! Somebody emptied a lot of pitch onto her, and then she come home sudden-like; and the rooster told 'em how the bad one was back, and the pitch is on her yet. So that was the end of the story.

“But I'll bet there was some scrappin' in that house,” was the lad's postscript.

V

DUN TO THE RESCUE



DUN TO THE RESCUE

SUDDENLY Ludovic sat up, his body tense. Cries and commotion from the little lake that dimpled in the distance beyond the superb sweep of grass, had come to his consciousness. The companions were startled out of their mood of pleasure-day enjoyment. Once and again a sharp staccato yelp split

Three of a Kind

the autumn air: Phil knew it at once. It was a friend talking, a friend who needed help. Dun was in trouble. Springing to their feet, the two rushed pell-mell towards the water.

Already a crowd of people were gathered from the various pleasancess of the park; a burly blue-coated officer dominated it and was engaged, as they reached the scene, in pushing the massed humanity back from the water's edge. Another officer, Phil and Ludovic noticed when they reached the bank, was strenuously oaring a small skiff out from the shore. But their eyes looked anxiously beyond him, to a tiny black dot that bobbed along the ripples and made for the bank. Yes, it was Dun, — Dun with something in his mouth, which looked at first glance like a piece of white rag. But a second look, and their hearts went a-thumping;

Dun to the Rescue

it was a bit of dress that gleamed white and the dog was manfully struggling against seemingly insuperable odds to bring it to shore, and the child with it. A hurried question or two revealed the whole situation. The child, a girl of six or eight, had been in one of the pleasure boats without her nurse, who had carelessly strolled away to talk to a friend; trig-keeled, the craft had floated from the bank and overturned, and the little one, far beyond her depth, had begun to drown before the eyes of the spectators, mostly women petrified with fear.

The dog, excited by her cries and splashes, had dashed in after her, perhaps with the instinct of play, possibly — who knows? — animated with the divine instinct of helpfulness. In any case, in he had gone and was now doing yeoman service. The child was under water in

Three of a Kind

the main, no doubt half drowned; but she could yet be saved if drawn out in time. Certainly the animal could not tow the little body all the distance in to shore; but at least he was so far keeping it from the bottom, — and the policeman was drawing near with swift oar-strokes.

Phil stood trembling on the bank: without his being aware of it, his hand sought and found Ludovic's; he was thinking, be it confessed, fully as much of the dog as of the human tot whose life was in jeopardy.

“Good boy, Dun. Come on, that's the dog,” he called in a rather uncertain voice, and interspersed the words with the particular whistle of three notes — a long and two short, like a telegrapher's code — which was their private shibboleth. Responsive to the call, still more frantically did Dun struggle on; he

Dun to the Rescue

would have barked, but, like the crow in the fable, to do so would have been to drop his prey. Ludovic's deep voice supplemented Phil's:

“ Du Lieber Hund, Come, mein little Dun. *Kommst du jetzt, ach, du bist ein braver Mann!* ”

All mortal crises are brief, and so it was here. Suspense gave way to relief, when the policeman swept alongside the child and dog; he drew the poor little morsel of unconscious humanity from the lake, limp, sodden with water, safe into the boat, and then — to his honor be it spoken — drew the dog in after her, apparently to the latter's high indignation. But it was just as well that the kindly officer had not left Dun to his own devices in the water, for when he crawled on shore and, after a convulsive shake of his water-logged body which showered

Threë of a Kind

wet radiations upon the eager circle surrounding him and broke it up abruptly, crouched at the feet of his masters, young and old, who overwhelmed him with caresses despite his wetness, he could but tremble and whimper and put his belly close to the ground in an abject sort of way that bespoke a sense either of wrong-doing or great exhaustion — perhaps both. That he was a hero he had no comprehension; Nature had denied him that glow of self-righteous satisfaction which might come to a human who had performed a like act.

Meanwhile, a physician, summoned by a telephone message in the pleasure-house near by, and responding with marvellous promptness, had arrived, and after some fifteen minutes rapid, skilful working over the girl, was rewarded by her restoration to breath and the color of

Dun to the Rescue

life. After a round scolding of the thoroughly frightened maid, he hustled his charge off in a closed carriage, making for home and dry clothes.

The attention of the pleasure-seekers was thus naturally centred on Dun, and encomiums upon his conduct flew thick and fast. Many were the expressions of surprise that so small a fellow could exhibit such power. In truth, the cocker spaniel has a wiry strength that belies his diminutive proportions. He has a record in history for deeds of bravery and endurance that seem better suited to breeds like the Newfoundland or St. Bernard. And although one might sooner expect his brother, the water-spaniel, to perform aquatic feats, yet all the spaniel varieties of dog are likely to show self-sacrificing sagacity by land or water.

The big policeman seemed especially

Three of a Kind

interested and was careful to take the address of the trio — as Ludovic supposed, that he might make the usual report at headquarters of this small incident of the city's daily life. He did not realize what good “copy” Dun had furnished the newspaper reporters, and was to be instructed by the morning journals.

Brief are the tragic memories of dog-kind. Later under the trees, while they ate their luncheon, of which, you may be very sure, Dun got his full portion, he was dry, full of life, happy; revelling in the extra petting he received and ready, no doubt, for the humdrum or heroic, as either might chance to come his way.

As the shadows lengthened over the wide green sward, the old musician was making his fiddle sing, to the vast joy of a rapidly assembling audience already



THE OLD MUSICIAN WAS MAKING HIS FIDDLE SING.
[Page 108,

Dun to the Rescue

in a most friendly mood toward the three, because of the spreading of the news of Dun's water prowess. The opportunity for a handsome collection was never better; all the more rigidly did Ludovic stick to their usual habit of art for art's sake on the Sabbath — an unconscious coadjutor herein of the open Sunday picture-gallery. Music for pure pleasure's sake, in the midst of fair outdoor scenes, bringing gladness to the maker of melody and to all who chose to hear — this was his ideal. And so, for an hour or more, he lured vibrant, pleading, passionate sounds out of those few strings which yet, in their appeal, cover all life and reach from the soul of man to the loftiest pinnacles of heaven.

It was a telling scene: the noble oaks, beneath them the chequer of sun and shade as the afternoon wore on to dusk,

Three of a Kind

and under one splendid tree the picturesque German, with dog and boy curled up on either side of him, as he made his impromptu audience — the chance, motley gathering of the moment — a unit of pure and innocent delight while they listened to that Voice which cometh from on high. One woman's careworn hand surreptitiously wiped away a tear when he played "Home Sweet Home" with a lingering tenderness that plainly impressed all; and an elderly man, seemingly a laborer in his Sunday best, with an empty sleeve where his right arm should have been, was moved to a spontaneous cheer when, after various delicate and fanciful improvisations, Ludovic, who was endeavoring to please the crowd rather than himself, swung into the martial movement of "Marching Through Georgia."

Dun to the Rescue

And it was heart-warming, too, at the end, to hear them follow his suggestion and sing "America" in vociferous (and not over tuneful) unison. Those simple folk were not cultivated enough to know that patriotism is bad taste. Such moments are the corner-stones of our faith in humanity; they point to a future when all and every art shall be truly democratic, coming from the people, going back to the people, for the common welfare, the common joy.

When they left the park, it was well along towards twilight. Ludovic went into a little beer shop just outside the grounds; being thirsty and a Teuton, he was fain to quench thirst in the natural way; aided and abetted in the tendency by the journals of the city, which just then were full of alarms over the state of the city water; diagrams of much-mag-

Three of a Kind

nified microbes spotted the Sunday issues. The saloon was beyond the city limits and did a thriving business on holidays and holy-days. Behind the bar was the obese proprietor, whose neck was vast and red, and who looked as if he never had a thought above his bottles. He might have sat in stone on a brewery's walls in the character of Gambrinus, though his tongue betrayed him as Hibernian.

Helping him in his business was his wife; her fiery face and corpulency also implied alcoholic indulgence. Yet there was a pleasant expression on her broad countenance, with its neatly combed gray hair, softening the whole effect of her personality. Back of the bar among the decorative bottles and other fixtures of the place, she had set a large vase of chrysanthemums; they made a brilliant note of outdoors in the dingy, beetling

Dun to the Rescue

room, and it was fine to see with what honest delight she touched the splendid autumn blooms — daintily, in a way that belied her coarse pudgy fingers — rearranging them, even once bending down her face as if in caress, scentless though they were. Her husband cast a kindly look at her as she did this.

The woman noticed that Phil's face bespoke admiration of the vase, as the boy waited while Ludovic drained his glass; and taking a royal red fellow from the bunch, offered it to him with a smile so winning that it might have been a mother's.

“ Yez be liking them, I see,” she said. “ Me darter got thim the morning, and I thought I'd brighten up the bar wid 'em for the sake of me customers. They're purty, ain't they, me little man? Sure, so is me Eliz'beth, if I do say it as

Three of a Kind

shouldn't. She is that light on the feet of her, you'd think it was a drift o' wind. Och, 'twas mesilf was light footed onct — ”

“ Business, old woman,” quoth her husband, patting her not ungently on the shoulder the while; several men had entered and both husband and wife at once bustled about to serve them.

Phil thanked the Irish woman (whom he had the bad taste to refer to, in speaking to Ludovic, as “ the lady ”), and the pair of friends went out into the dusk and gold of the early evening, to wend their way back to the city. They had had a perfect day of recreation. Workers as they were, this playtime, this breathing spell between labors, had been relished to the full. The professional vagabond knows not their joy: he is the hardest worked of them all. It is only the ama-

Dun to the Rescue

teur tramp who tastes the true exquisiteness of loafing. It took an inspired amateur, Walt Whitman, to hymn it. Truly, to dream a-field is a wonderful consolation after the working week of the city.

Next morning, before either of them had left their lodging, came a surprise. A ringing rap at the door was followed by the entrance of a ponderous policeman, the very officer who had participated in the park scene of the previous day. A vague yet potent fear penetrated the whole being of Phil; he was still too much the street gamin not to nurse an instinctive awe and dread of these impersonations of the law; his conscience was clear, to be sure, but the feeling is not reasonable so much as intuitive. One might almost describe it as tribal, atavistic: it stands for the ancient antagonism of the child of nature

Three of a Kind

to the forces of society; the fearsome representatives of law and order. Moreover, there had been events in his innocently lawless past in which bluecoats had figured, when he, along with his mates — technically known as the “avenue gang” — had scurried to cover like so many hares at the approach of a hound.

But not so with Ludovic. He greeted the officer merely as a fellow human being, offering him a chair with the sweetest bonhomie: he was by far too well-bred to let his puzzlement at the call show on the surface.

It was the policeman's way not to beat about the bush. Squaring his knees he began:

“I come from headquarters to see yez about your dog — I don't see him, at all, at all, this morning” — and he looked

Dun to the Rescue

about the room. The fact was, Dun had been allowed to disport himself below stairs with a companion canine who had recently come to the house, further to brighten Dun's lot. Phil's vague fear deepened almost to panic, but Ludovic calmly replied :

“ Ah, the Hund, yes? He is not here about. But what of him, mein friend? ”

“ Well, you see, I was telling the chief about him and showing him where it said in the ‘ Star ’ newspaper how he was a Jim Dandy, and — ”

Phil's fright vanished — he could not restrain himself ; but broke in with :

“ Is it in the newspaper, honest? ”

“ Sure! Didn't ye see it? ” replied the officer, with genial expansiveness. “ Wid his picture and scare-heads, and pretty nigh a column all to himself? ”

Phil gasped ; his first impulse was to

Three of a Kind

dash from the room to get a copy. Visions of selling papers containing the account of Dun's exploit filled his mind. But the next words froze him where he stood:

"And the chief was thinkin' as you might like to sell thè animal, — let us make a dog-policeman out of him, do ye see?"

"A — a policemen's of Dun aus?" stammered the old musician.

"Gee, I never heard of anything like that!" added Phil breathlessly.

"Why, that's all right," went on the officer, evidently enjoying the sensation he had created. "We're thinkin' of puttin' a squad of dog police in the parks, so as to save folks from drownin'; and sure, your pup would be one of the best in the bunch. He'd be captain of the force, I dunno, after a bit." And a loud guffaw made the rafters vibrate. "We

Dun to the Rescue

could give yez twenty-five dollars, if — ”

Ludovic and Phil had been communicating telepathically as well as by eye talk.

“ Nay, mein friend, not so,” now spoke up the former. “ We could not, what you call, spare Dun, de little doggie, we, — he is a friend like by us, we are so — so used mit him, *kennst du*. Hey, Phil ? ” He looked rather helplessly towards his fellow lodger ; there had been a suspicious quaver in his voice ; and, as ever when his feelings were much implicated, his English idioms had suffered.

Phil tried hard to speak ; he too seemed to be having trouble with a lump in his throat, but after swallowing rapidly several times, managed to articulate :

“ You bet your life we don’t sell Dun.” Suddenly a woful thought smote him : “ You — you don’t mean they’ll take him away from us, do you, Mr. Peeler ? ”

Three of a Kind

The sentence tumbled out before he realized his manner of address; then, perceiving that it might not please the visitor, he promptly turned a rich turkey red.

“ Bliss ye, no,” said the officer, with a kind of bibulous chuckle, as he rose. “ I was only thinking you might be glad to get the money.” His eyes roamed unwittingly over the apartment, as if to take stock of its quality and appraise its market value.

“ If you don’t want to part with — what’s his name? Dun — why, it’s up to yez. Nor I can’t blame ye; sure it’s mesilf, Michael Hogarty, that loves dogs: haven’t I got a nice little bull-dog in me flat and he can take the natest bite out of a burglar’s breeches of any animal on the block. Me old woman, she says — ”

Just what the “ old woman ” said was

Dun to the Rescue

never revealed: there came a scratching sound outside the door. Phil opened it: and in bounded Dun, brimfull of the milk of human kindness: then stopped short, nonplussed by the stranger within the gates. But in a moment, his tail almost wagged his body at the ingratiating advances of the policeman, who said a hearty good-by to the three. His last words were:

“Let us know, if ye plaze, whin yez change your mind: we can use a smart little man like that dog is, any time. He’d head the procession, I’m telling ye, and that’s no lie.”

And One of the Finest left them and their big sense of relief together. Then it was a sight worth seeing: Phil on his knees hugging the breath out of his four-footed friend, with Ludovic, a benevolent *deus ex machina*, interpolating a

Three of a Kind

caress as he was able. It was a happy Monday for Dun, because of the extra affection lavished upon him by his home people.

VI

LUCK CHANGES



LUCK CHANGES

“**T**HOU liar, *Du Pechvogel*, shame on thee for such slander-talk!”

The words rang out so resonantly clear, that persons sitting in the front seats of the theatre during the entr'acte heard it and opened their eyes to what seemed a “situation” not indicated in the play-

Three of a Kind

bill. It was a gray-headed violinist who was speaking, half rising from his seat as he did so; and apparently he addressed the leader of the orchestra, who, very red and wrathful, replied in a louder tone and tapped his baton as signal for the next selection. The violinist sank back into his seat with a blanched and rigid face and resumed his duty.

The train of events leading to this explosion was simple in its logic. The "turn" which had just held the stage had been given by a very beautiful girl whose presence and performance lifted the entertainment to a higher plane than was its wont. Night after night she stood in the wings, her mother beside her, waiting her call before the footlights; night after night, her songs over, mother and daughter departed in a cab for their comfortable home, — a home

Luck Changes

only possible through the daughter's work. She seemed an alien note in such an atmosphere and indeed but a few years later was to take her place among the great artists of the legitimate drama. And even now, she often held the roughest, most careless element of her audiences spell-bound by the freshness, the sweetness and purity of her rendition of some familiar ballad like "Annie Laurie" or "The Last Rose of Summer." Coming as her work did, in a setting of coarse humor, miscellaneous horse-play and rag-time music, it was like a puff of hale west wind in a malodorous place.

The orchestra conductor, beefy and gross, with ridges of flesh under his eyes, — a type of that coarse animal who by a mysterious Providence is not infrequently dowered with a certain musical gift along with his dominant porcine tendencies,

Three of a Kind

had besoiled her, and himself, by a remark which stung Ludovic like the bite of a noxious insect. He had been touched and pleased by the way the young woman had sung an old-English ballad, "Jeanette and Jeannot," — seldom heard nowadays, but very appealing and lovely; she seemed in personality fitted for the simple, soulful sentiment of the piece. Then came the low slur — the slur so often ignorantly, cruelly flung out to take its slimy way in the world with perhaps no slightest foundation of fact; the slur stage folk have to endure as a painful penalty of their profession.

And Ludovic had boiled over and hurled words at the leader, unforgivable, he knew, to such a man. Selfishly viewed, his speech had been rash, foolish: the girl was naught to him, — moreover, he had helped her no whit by his impulsive

Luck Changes

defence. But the musician lacked practicality and suffered the handicap of being by instinct a gentleman. All innocent womanhood had been smirched by the innuendo: and by the memory of Hilda, of whose name this young singer's reminded him, he would not, could not, endure it.

"She, she is pure and good," he cried, "look at her face; and thou, thou art a pig of the sty!"

And a spontaneous though quickly suppressed murmur of approval had rippled through the rest of the orchestral group, for their leader was no favorite with his men, and Ludovic was: his old-fashioned courtliness and kindly attitude toward one and all having long since won their liking.

What followed was only what his fear foretold. His superior could not be ex-

Three of a Kind

pected to tolerate the humiliation to which he had been exposed, in the face of his associates.

“Go to the box office and get your week’s pay; you’re through here,” was all he vouchsafed at the end of the evening’s performance. And Ludovic bowed his head and received his sentence without a word in reply. It was as balm to his spirit, to have thrust into his hand, as he was leaving by the stage door after sundry warm handclasps from different members of the orchestra, a crumpled little note which Miss Cameron had hastily scribbled in her dressing-room:

“DEAR MR. LUDOVIC” (it ran):

“It was so good of you, — I heard about it and am so grieved that it has got you into trouble. If I can do anything in

Luck Changes

the world to help at any time, do let me know.

“Your affectionate friend,

“HULDA.”

Hulda! — her name was so like his own Hilda's! Perhaps that was the unconscious reason he had been led to take her part. It was a mere coincidence, of course, that this sweet girl should have borne a name similar to that of one sacred in his memory; but all the same he kissed the note surreptitiously with double fervor, as he went out into the vague night — for the last time.

An hour later, he sat in his worn arm-chair, his long dressing-gown wrapping his lank frame, the pipe of peace comfortably alight. Phil was out for the evening, for the purpose of attending an

Three of a Kind

important meeting of the Newsboys' Protective Association; even newsboys protect themselves as instinctively nowadays against the tyranny of capital, as did the barons in the middle ages against the power of the king. The session evidently had been a protracted one, since it was well past midnight. Dun, for the nonce, was too overpowered by sleep on his scrap of carpet in the corner to make his usual claim to a place in the musician's lap. But Ludovic hardly heeded the lad's absence; his thoughts were deep in the past.

On his knees he held a curious old box of German manufacture which he regarded lovingly, meditatively, sadly, yet with absent eyes. Many years ago had he purchased it, pleased with its foreign make: he loved the polish of its cedar frame, inlaid with ivory and brass studded;

Luck Changes

the skilful jointure of its parts in lieu of the horrid modern habit of nails, nails everywhere; the deft divisions within, soft cushioned and giving out a faint sweet scent, like the storied wood of Lebanon. Ludovic had hardly examined the compartments with care, so many were they, each with its inviting corner for hidden treasure. Stray bits of manuscript music, theme sketches of his own creation, he had laid away in it from time to time; but for the most part, it was a possession not so much utilitarian as æsthetic; a thing of beauty and so its own excuse for being. And it was associated — and hence doubly dear — with the irrecoverable past, when the hope of Hilda was still hot in his heart, — Hilda, poor child, lost angel of his youth!

The old musician's thoughts went back to the very day, when, after some chaf-

Three of a Kind

fering with the honest German *hausfrau* who had owned the box, he had carried it away in triumph to his lodging. It had belonged, so she had said, to a pretty *fraulein* who had died a year or two before and left it to her, its present owner; the description she gave of the girl, alone and lonesome in a strange land, had recalled Hilda and made the box, very likely an heirloom in the maiden's family, seem all the more precious; it was almost like a link between him and the lost *Geliebte*.

And now, heart-heavy, Ludovic was considering the advisability of selling this bit of property. He felt sure it had value for its rare workmanship and unusual design, especially in these latter days of keen appreciation of the older and better art ideals. More than once he had been offered sums for it that seemed fabulous

Luck Changes

when set beside what he had paid for it. But he had never considered parting with it, though occasionally tempted to do so, in order that the money might go toward a much coveted violin to add to his collection. Still he had resisted; something in him had shrunk from the idea of pawning his treasure: in his simple, frugal life it had not hitherto been necessary to take such a step; and now his pride revolted.

Yet — he was now reflecting — it might be the best thing to do, after all. For the time had come when money would be needed. His main source of income had been ruthlessly cut off; it was the threshold of winter and not until spring could he hope to cover his loss partially by steady work as an itinerant street musician. Odd jobs might be picked up, here and there, during the winter season — a dance here, a reception there — but

Three of a Kind

nothing could be counted on. His little hoard of savings had of late been sadly depleted by the purchase — an extravagance irresistible — of a curious old seventeenth century fiddle, which he suspected to be a Guarnerius, and which he had acquired dirt cheap.

Yes, the outlook was rather grave. He was too easy-going in temperament to save much, at the best, out of his earnings. With the theater engagement, he lived in homely comfort, little more; without it, even with such help as Phil might bring, it would be but the scantiest of livings for them both. It was a point of pride with Ludovic not to touch a penny of the newsboy's little hoard, which, to his young eyes, was already like Pelion piled on Ossa for colossal proportions.

And so Ludovic sat there; fondly handled the old box, and dreamt an old

Luck Changes

dream with a bitter taste to it of the present, — that present which, in one guise or another, tyrannously grasps us all and bears us from our beloved idols of hope or joy or memory.

And now befell one of those odd chances which Life, as a matter of fact, has the habit of dealing out with a prodigal hand; albeit Art is somewhat chary of reporting her; truth being so much stranger than fiction, that the artist, seeking the seeming-true rather than reality, selects a few symbols out of the generous offerings of daily experience to stand for the whole. Half unconsciously, Ludovic's fingers strayed in one corner of the box, picking at the cushion which lined its fragrant wood; with unseeing eyes he pulled it aside; an old yellowing piece of paper, hitherto quite overlooked, lay beneath it; beside the paper lay an old coin,

Three of a Kind

one of the Hessian *groschen* of the musician's youth. How often, with such a money piece tightly clutched in his chubby hand, had he trotted to the sweet-meat shop in Cassel, for the coveted sugar stick which it took the delicious suckings of half a day materially to diminish in size! Aware at last of his find, he lifted the paper from its long hidden nest, spread it out upon his lap and began to decipher the faded words written in his own German speech. And lo! in a trice, twenty years and more rolled away, and a vibrant pleading voice out of the Past, out of the very grave, sounded in his ears, whose throb-throb seemed a sort of mournful accompaniment:

“MY LUDOVIC:

“You will never see this, but I shall write to you to ease my heart. O, my

Luck Changes

betrotthed one ! I waited, waited in the fatherland for a word, and no word ever came. Then Hans made love to me — and I said *No*. But he tried ever, and you did not send me word ; and O, Ludovic, I yielded, — yielded all, for he promised marriage, and he seemed good. Then, in shame, with my unborn child in my bosom, I came to America, — not seeking you, but to hide me away. And now I am dying ; and that is all — except this : I learned when it was too late that you had sent for me. Hans kept the letter from me ; so I hate him ; my mother-milk turned to poison in my two breasts. O, Ludovic, forgive me and love my memory if you can. For I would have been faithful, yes. And the little boy babe, here beside me, what will become of him ? I wish he had your eyes. Would to God he could find you ; for his own father, he is

Three of a Kind

bad; then he would have a friend for my sake. So now no more. Good-by! dear, dear Ludovic, and forgive

“Your unhappy

“HILDA.”

A deep groan came with a sudden startling distinctness out of the dim midnight room, where the embers of the fire that the old musician had stirred into fitful life, made eerie flickerings upon the wainscoted walls. That was the only sound for a long, long while. The master's head drooped over the yellow sheet in his uncertain hand. Now at last he knew: Hilda, his poor beloved, the sport of an unkind fate, was dead. And she loved him and he knew it not!

Never a thought of blame crossed his mind. The imperative judgments of the human heart in such cases brush aside

Luck Changes

the superficial aspects of convention and go straight to the root of the matter. Hilda had loved, been deceived, — and was dead! That was all, that was quite enough: *Sie hatte geliebt und gelebt und sie war todt.* There was strangely little bitterness in his mood, as he mused sadly through the midnight hour. She was at rest, and the knowledge that she had been true-hearted, that she was the creature of untoward circumstances, nothing more, had its ineffable consolation. Before, there was a dreadful uncertainty, a torturing doubt; perhaps she had been light, inconstant. Now, he knew the worst — and the best. Hereafter, Hilda's image would have a permanent tender shrine in the secret places of his spirit.

And the child, the boy? The thought came almost like the impact of a bullet

Three of a Kind

on his consciousness. What had become of Hilda's little one? She must have lodged at the house of the woman from whom he had purchased the box — now a temple in which had been so long hidden a precious relic. But alas! the *Hausfrau* had married and returned to Germany many many years since. He had no idea where she lived. The chance of finding the child, though desperate indeed, lent a new meaning to his life. Slowly he raised the old letter to his tremulous lips; inarticulately he registered a vow to seek, seek ever for the boy who was hers but not his; who should be his for her dear sake, if ever he could be found this side the grave!

Again, he half started to his feet, under the impetus of thought: thinking of Hilda's wee lad, he remembered, by some thread of connection, his own Phil; where

Luck Changes

was he, and the hour nigh to one o'clock? A fear fell on the musician, as he realized how abnormal it was that the newsboy should not have come home before.

As if in answer to the unspoken query, came the noise of feet ascending the stairs: *tramp, tramp, tramp* they sounded, with an omen in the echo. He knew instantly that it was not Phil's step: it was the tread of a number of persons, reverberating, unnaturally loud in the stillness of the night. Unconsciously Ludovic's nerves stiffened, quivering to a presentiment of evil; then a knock on the door, and the sad procession entered: three men, a doctor in the van, and two others carrying between them the little fellow who had wound himself about the musician's heart. With a great cry, the German threw himself upon his knees beside the body:

Three of a Kind

“Mein Phil, du liebe Kind, ach, he is not dead? Nay, so is it not?” and it took a wan smile from Phil and the assurance of the others as they rapidly installed the boy upon the old lounge and began to work over a limp right leg, to restore Ludovic to comparative calm. In all the processes of dressing the wound and making the patient comfortable, Dun was greatly in evidence, keyed up to such a pitch of suppressed excitement that the room hardly held him; betokening in a dozen ways his impotent desire to be useful.

It was a street accident, they told him. A fire engine had turned a corner and the slew of the machine to the gutter had pinned the boy in such a way that the bones in his right foot had been badly crushed. It would not be permanently serious, they decided in a few minutes of

Luck Changes

skilful examination, but Phil would be laid up for some weeks.

An hour later, when the night was beginning to pale towards dawn, he was resting quietly in the little bedroom and there was a smell of anesthetics in the air; Ludovic, as assistant, was humbly obeying the orders of an unobtrusive but highly efficient young woman. It had been deemed wise to have a professional nurse for a night or so, and through the day when Ludovic must be absent. The musician could not sleep that night, or rather during the remnant that was left; he had much to think of, out of bygone times, much to plan for the future, and much to engross him in the living present. Anyway, he murmured with a full heart, his dear Phil was not killed; and Hilda, Hilda was with God, and her boy, maybe he would be found. And yet how hope-

Three of a Kind

less, how absurd even to dream of such a thing! As well expect to identify a grain of sand on the seashore, — a tiny grain long since washed away by the clamorous inrush of innumerable waves.

Then his thoughts came back with a surge of tenderness to the young sufferer in the next room, who now and then moaned a little as he shifted his position. Yes, duties were laid upon him both of the head and the heart. He was out of work and there were two mouths to feed. His hand fell thoughtfully upon the sleek, ebon fur of Dun, whose sympathetic whine testified as plainly as any words that the faithful dog knew that things had gone wrong with his comrades, and was fain to help them, although he had

‘No language but a cry.’

VII

THE WOLF AND THE DOG



THE WOLF AND THE DOG

AND now came the days of the wolf at the door, — and the dog inside the door to fright him away! For Dun proved himself worth his weight in gold when trouble visited the three. He developed unheard-of activities and intelligencies. He would fetch and carry for Phil, as the

Three of a Kind

invalid lay in bed and whiled away the hours with the illustrated papers or in counting his bank money. As a concession to the peculiar situation, it was decided between the two — I had almost said three, including Dun in the family councils, — that there would be nothing undignified in unlocking the little strong-box, in order that the hoarded savings might be seen and handled: to tell over his accumulations, re-arranging, estimating their purchasing power, planning possible expenditures, all this made the boy's time far less wearisome than it would otherwise have been.

Phil was at great pains to instruct the cocker in the mysteries of the denominations: to discriminate between nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars and dollars. By the most patient lessons, he brought Dun to the point where, with a scornful

The Wolf and the Dog

sniff at the lesser coins, he would gleefully nose out from the pile and seek to take into his mouth (not, it must be confessed, with complete success) the large silver pieces. One of the reasons you have perhaps never seen a dog able to exhibit this form of intelligence, is just because you never tried to teach him, as did our friend Phil; chosen members of the canine community can do wonders as can chosen members of the human race — if only you give them attention and encouragement enough. There was no mistaking the triumph in Dun's demeanor when, from a high pile of money, he abstracted a big shining silver dollar; his bark had in it all the unworldly exultation of the explorer who attains to a new land; it was not the joy of possession, fierce, personal; but rather the subtler, more impersonal joy of discovery.

Threë of a Kind

Concerning such a feat there will be an unpleasant doubting Thomas sort of person to declare promptly that any dog separating a particular coin from a group thereof, does so by luck, not sagacity; an interpretation to which he is perfectly welcome. We remember that by nature he is an unhappy creature, whom we can afford to pity; also that he did not know Dun: and we pity him again.

Or Dun, at a snap of the finger from Phil, would grab a paper from the living-room and trot with it in his mouth to the bedside, there to sit on his haunches and await his master's pleasure, every inch of his body a big, expressive wriggle of joyful service, an arch look in his eye impossible to reproduce by the poor medium of words. When Ludovic soothed the boy's pain with a tune on the fiddle, it was remarkable how Dun modified his howl, as

The Wolf and the Dog

if conscious that this was a sick-room, not the hurly-burly of the streets : at such times, he roared you gently as a sucking dove. Sadly did the dog miss the free outdoor life he led when his young master was well. Ludovic took him for a brief run once or twice a day, but the joint journalistic activity was stopped perforce. And he was too great a solace in the sick-room to be spared for long. It was truly wonderful to see the animal jump upon the lower end of Phil's bed and daintily step over the wounded member, exercising such care that never once did he hit the foot or give its possessor even a tremor of nervousness. It seemed part of his instinct to avoid the leg, as surely when it was thrust under the bed-clothes as when, later, Phil was dressed and lying on top of them, his limb swathed in imposing bandages.

Three of a Kind

In short, Dun did almost everything except play the violin: and maybe he refrained from that only for fear of hurting Ludovic's feelings.

The climax of his powers found expression in a game, invented by the friends during these days of enforced idleness; a game yielding them a huge amount of pleasure. The three would sit around the large old-fashioned dining-table; I said the three, for Dun had his chair as well as the rest of them and sat up in it with exuberant joy fairly exhaling from his tense body. It took some days to keep him from anticipating the game by striking his paws alternately on the shining mahogany surface, — shining still, though scratched in a manner that would have induced nervous prostration in a house-keeper of the gentler sex.

This is how the game was played.

The Wolf and the Dog

Trumps were first named, and a pack of cards was then strewn face down over the table, and each player in turn — here again Dun manifested a well nigh irreducible predilection to be first — struck a card at random with his hand (or paw); it was then turned up and its suit disclosed. In case it was the trump suit, the player had it for his own; if not, it was mixed into the pack again. This procedure was maintained until the pack gradually melted away into nothing, and the winner was of course that contestant who, with nothing in the center of the table left to draw from, was found to have the largest fraction of the original pile.

It was fairly amazing to see what fun all of them derived from this profound game; and more than marvellous to watch Dun play it. It was a matter of slow, though steady improvement with

Three of a Kind

him, to place himself upon a par with his companions. Phil worked very hard and his efforts were finally crowned with conspicuous success. At first, it took much patience to induce the dog to sit in a chair, without either climbing on to the table or jumping back to the floor; then, hardest of all, was the proper striking of the card with his fore-paw when his turn came. Apparently, Dun would have been better pleased to hit the table at random, in intervals guided by his degree of emotion; he regarded it as great larks as a form of exercise, quite apart from its esoteric significance in the game. But a warning "Dun!" uttered in a low but impressive tone by Phil, worked wonders, and in a few days the animal only hit his card when his turn came and his action was jogged by the admonitory "Now, Dun!" from the boy who was

The Wolf and the Dog

to him a guide. When it happened that Dun's pile waxed and grew at the expense of the others, complacent and friendly pats were showered upon him in profusion, and when, as sometimes occurred, he actually won, and a shout from Phil, a victorious waving of his meerscham by Ludovic, signalled the event, the excitement of their commensal became ecstatic and he would break over the rules by placing both forefeet on the table, and emitting ear-piercing barks, while his tail wagged so fiercely that its rat-a-tat-tat against the chair had for all the world quite a military sound. Or perhaps he would dash frantically about the room, vent the usual staccato yelps and knock over such small objects as lay in his path; until on one such occasion a deprecatory call from an old maid on the next floor below, to see if her fellow

Three of a Kind

lodgers had a fire in their apartments, suggested the necessity of restraint.

“Ain’t he a top-liner?” Phil would cry with unction, at one of these exhibitions; his speech, you may perceive, took some of its color from the variety halls which he had more assiduously cultivated before he joined forces with the violinist.

“He’s on to the curves of the game, all right. He’d be a prize in a gambling house, for to sit by and watch ’em deal and yell when anything was crooked, — wouldn’t he, Ludy?”

“*Ja wohl*,” replied the musician, as Phil looked at the small but sagacious brute with that particular kind of benevolence with which one responsible for remarkable results is wont to gaze upon his handiwork.

If you force me to express an opinion

The Wolf and the Dog

whether or no Dun really understood the game — which by the way they had spontaneously named “Paw-Paws” in his honor, — all I can say is that he certainly *seemed* to understand it, and, moreover, obeyed its laws when once they were learned, much better than you and I, my dear sir, obey the laws of the game of life. Anyhow, you could not find in a day’s travel a more agreeable spectacle than that of Dun in the middle of the contest, bursting with the desire to hit a card and so add to his pile, but restrained until his turn came by Phil’s look, or word, or warning finger; checking abortive movements towards action again and again, and saying to his associates as plainly as tail and eye could: “My, but it’s a long while since I did anything — can’t I play, please, little lame master or big shaggy one?”

Three of a Kind

It is a popular notion that the brute creation does not laugh save for the unmirthful cachinnation of the hyena. To sit by Dun through one of these games, would have been sufficient to kill this fallacy forever: his teeth fairly shone in grin after grin that wrinkled his nose and advertised his glee.

Many otherwise tedious hours were thus sped away by the three, who, as always with the innocent of heart, were easily amused, as you see.

Perhaps there is no better place than this, when you are rapt in admiration of Dun's character and accomplishments, to confess to a defect in him that it is a grief to his true lover even to refer to: indeed, I have more than half a mind not to mention it. But as this is above all else a truthful chronicle, you shall hear the worst.

The Wolf and the Dog

It is connected with the matter of dog-biscuit: Dun would *not* eat them — there! the murder is out. Now, the dog books will all inform you that this food preparation is the best possible dietary for a dog: and most dogs, after more or less coaxing or compulsion, take kindly enough to the idea. And, as dog owners know, it is an immense simplification of the question of the canine diet. But Dun simply turned up his aristocratic nose at the dog-biscuit: cajolements and threats were alike unavailing. Even when the biscuit were soaked in excellent gravy he showed but a languid interest and had developed an absolute genius for nozzling the solid food aside and lapping up the liquid. Not that he affected the Teutonic in his tastes and begged Ludovic for Bologna. No, his motto seemed to be: *Aut Caesar, aut*

Three of a Kind

nihil: give me Christian meat or give me starvation. So with a firmness that was Roman-like in its gravity and persistence, he refused dog-biscuit. It need not be said, that some households would have starved (or even beaten) the creature into accepting this convenient, inexpensive and wholesome bill-of-fare. But alas! the top-room cronies were not the people to do it; they were too soft-hearted (as Dun no doubt knew) and so they meekly bowed down to his decision.

Phil sagely suggested (after an important talk with the violinist concerning the problem) that Dun's former free life, with swill-pails innumerable at his call, had spoiled him for so sober a gastro-nomic offering. To ask him to adjust himself to it, was a good deal like asking a patron of Delmonico's to change for life to a twenty-five cent vegetarian meal.

The Wolf and the Dog

And Ludovic further reflected that the great characters of history of whom he had cognizance, exhibited as a rule some little flaw, — mere spots on the sun: against which their general virtues shone but the more radiantly. So Dun was loved bespite his blemish.

But it was an anxious time, too, this of Phil's slow convalescence, although it served to knit these comrades together in the beautiful bonds of a still closer friendship. The extra expenses were heavy. Ludovic's small savings, laid by for a rainy day, dwindled steadily. It was a month before Phil could hobble about with the aid of a cane, from bedroom to living-room; a week more before the doctor took the bandages from his foot and let him don a stocking and easy shoe. Nurse and physician were yet to pay. Ludovic had tried to utilize his

Thréë of a Kind

time by overhauling his stock of manuscripts, to see if perchance he had written anything possessing a possible market value. He had always intended to publish some of his music, some day; but he had never given the matter sufficient attention to overcome inertia; this again was a sign of his temperament, the explanation, very likely, of the fact that he was a poor musician in a sky-parlor instead of a man famed in his calling, petted and pampered by a fickle public. Then, too, something in him shrunk from giving to the world creations in music which had been so intimate, so precious a part of himself: it seemed a form of indelicacy. Ah, the tragedy of the natures that have the highest faculty, yet lack the lower necessary to vanquish the world!

“And so we half men struggle; at the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.”

The Wolf and the Dog

One composition, a song in the minor key, especially took his fancy as he ruminated over his papers; he touched it a little, lovingly, here and there, played it on the violin, and encouraged both by Phil's frankly expressed approval and Dun's more than usually sympathetic wails, in response to the pathos of the piece, bore it away with him one day to a publisher. He had copied it out very neatly in his best hand and added a *Widmung* to Hilda. The critic, when Ludovic called next day for his answer, indulged in the usual hemming and hawing. The majority of those whose function it is to pass judgment upon the coinages of Art, make a loud-mouthed profession of their eagerness to secure the true, the good, and the beautiful. Too often, as a matter of fact, they fall into the easy rut of the commonplace

Three of a Kind

and the conventional, and turn but glazed eyes to the genuinely worthy new thing. The history of all the arts is the story of the attempt of the New Thing to dodge around the critic and get at the public, — which, much abused as it is, decides the question in the long run. For somehow, the public knows; there seems to be safety for the artist in their very numbers.

The critic in the present case, after informing Ludovic magisterially that his work was ungrammatical, that sentimental ballads were quite out of vogue and that there was no money (he meant for the composer) even in successes nowadays because of the outrageous copyright restrictions — a manner of talk leading logically up to a rejection of the musician's wares — told the violinist, in a sudden volteface, that his house would publish the song upon certain conditions: promi-

The Wolf and the Dog

nent among them, an arrangement whereby no royalty should be paid the composer until the expenses of publication had been covered. As a counter-proposition, Ludovic offered the manuscript for a quitclaim sum of fifty dollars, — which was accepted with an alacrity which might have been suspicious to a better business man than the old musician. By the transaction, the publisher, in all probability, stood to win a thousand or more. As it turned out, the little composition of Ludovic's became so widely known within two years, that its creator would have reaped what was for him riches, had he retained an ownership on his property — the child of his soul. But this has ever been the way of the artist tribe, since Jubal first harped in the days after Eden. And Ludovic trudged home with the check for fifty dollars in his pocket

Three of a Kind

and nothing but joy in his heart: his face beamed as he waved the slip of paper before Phil:

“See, my child, fifty dollars, nicht? Und Hilda’s name remembered by the lovers of music, because of my leedle song. It is good! very good! We shall have wine for thee, to-morrow, and two fine meals for pudel Dun — thou rascal hound!” And Ludovic playfully bent down to pull the animal’s long silky ears — one of the choicest of the cocker’s markings.

But in spite of this welcome addition to their income, it was a hard pull. The three had their share, during these weeks, in that main anxiety of the great mass of mankind: fear for the next meal. You, well-fed as well as gentle reader, do not, it may be, realize that this is the stern, if vulgar, immediate question, compared

The Wolf and the Dog

with which all others seem minor and academic. Beside its awful pressure, the subtleties of analytic action, so fondly portrayed by certain able modern makers of fiction, are but a puff of air. Hunger and love are, in truth, the two mighty motive forces driving man on to his destined fate; but hunger comes first by untold ages, and lasts longest; and in response to its imperious mandates, the sons of men arise and go forth to conquer — or to die.

Another disturbing element, of a very different kind, had also come into their life during Phil's period of inaction. When the nurse, in the first days of his injury, had hovered around him, administering quieting draughts and readjusting his bandages, she had been much drawn to her young patient because of his fine face, his piquant way of speech, the

Three of a Kind

buoyant manner in which he took his mishap. Nor had she failed to notice the signs of straitened means in the domicile of the old musician. His habit of beer-drinking out of the mammoth tankard had also left an unpleasant suggestion of dissolute practices upon her ladylike mind; previously, as it chanced, her ministrations had been mostly confined to families where elegant propriety ruled supreme. The boy in his tender years might become a swiller of beer — by imitation, she reflected. And what, in the meanwhile, was supporting the little household? Thus ran her cogitation: and it had seemed to her well-meaning if somewhat officious nature a case for philanthropic supervision. A brilliant scheme for bettering this humble home entered into her mind. How much of the so-called charity of our day has all

The Wolf and the Dog

the Christian virtues — and no tact! Whereas, one is almost tempted to say, the greatest of these is tact. So Miss Almer reported the case to a friend of hers, the secretary of a Society for Humanitarian Endeavor, and the result was a scene enacted on a bleak December morning in the shabby comfortable living-room on the tip-topiest floor of all.

It was ten o'clock, and Phil was lying in his bedroom while the big master sat at the table in the next room, sundry manuscripts about him, busily engaged in getting on to paper a tantalizing *chanson* which danced its way through his imagination. Candor compels to the admission that a breakfast smell of fried ham and sausage lingered on the air, implying two things: that the three had breakfasted late, and that Ludovic had a weakness for Wiener Schnitzel. Those

Three of a Kind

who are in search of a hero of romance, will kindly take notice that I am depicting ordinary humanity; a man, not a pattern plate.

A knock at the door made him look up, with a half frown; to his absent-minded and, be it confessed, not over-cordial *herein*, entered two figures, a man and a woman. Ludovic rose, bowed and courteously offered them chairs.

“This is Mr. Ludovic — ?” asked the man, in what was meant to be a gracious fashion, hesitating over the last name. There was just that slight tinge of patronage in his tone, that extra cordiality of manner, which suggests condescension and is sufficient to neutralize the kindly intent; a fact of which the visitor however was blissfully unaware.

“My name is Ludovic, yes, Ludovic Heffner, sir, at your pleasure,” said the

The Wolf and the Dog

musician. There was a certain courtliness in both manner and speech that was not lost on the other, who, to do him justice, had the best will in the world. He cleared his throat:

“ I am Mr. Redding, — one of the officers of the League of Loving Workers; you may have heard of it. And this is our house visitor, Miss Nevers.”

There was a perceptible stiffening in the carriage of their host; when he replied, the slight increase in his German accent, always noticeable, as we have seen, when excitement dominated him, could be detected: it was a sort of danger signal, had Mr. Redding but known it.

“ I know not your society, mein Herr. Why come you to me? Is it you have some — some message, yes? ”

There was a moment's pause, not with-

Three of a Kind

out its embarrassment on the side of the visitors. Then the social atmosphere was partially cleared by Miss Nevers, who broke in with a sweet voice, whose cordial ring made her words of secondary importance.

“ We heard of your misfortunes, Mr. Heffner: your being out of work and your — your ward’s accident. So we thought we would call to express sympathy and to see if we could help perhaps — make it easier for you in any way. How is the little man getting on ? ”

Ludovic, looking a trifle dazed, rose from his chair and went to the inner door.

“ *Entschuldigen Sie mich* — excuse me, if you please,” he said; then speaking to Phil: “ Come out, my child, we have guests.”

Immediately the rap-rap of the boy’s crutches announced his presence; he

The Wolf and the Dog

stood in the doorway a moment, gazing at the strangers, making a wonderful exotic note of the picturesque as he halted in this impromptu frame, with his swarthy vivid face, the lustrous dark hair above it and the white teeth gleaming now in a smile half sheepish but wholly polite.

“ Good morning, er — Phil, is it? How is your foot getting on? How long is it since it was hurt? ”

The very apparent good feeling in the inquiry made Phil feel easy:

“ Thank you, marm, it’s a-coming on fine, all right. I’ll be selling papers at the old stand in a week or ten days — hey, Dun? ”

The inclusion of the dog was but natural, for at that moment a deep growl, coming seemingly out of the bowels of nowhere, had somewhat disconcerted the callers, especially Mr. Redding, whose

Three of a Kind

humanitarian manner of life had not bred in him a love of animals. Don had been secreted up to this time behind the screen ; it was with him a favorite place of retirement for meditation or sleep : that he had not come alertly forth at the unusual event of a knock on the door, was abnormal and due perhaps to an extra hearty meal dispensed by the too prodigal hand of Ludovic at a time when the amount of food in the menage was a matter of rather close calculation. But the musician would have begun the curtailment with himself rather than with the dog.

Dun now stepped gravely forth, took the center of the stage and looked from his own people to the newcomers with a mien which, translated into the speech of man, might have been more direct than Chesterfieldian in quality. I rejoice to set it down that he did not belong to that

The Wolf and the Dog

nondescript order of animal (mostly found among the mongrel class) which indiscriminately accepts all humans, making no distinction between good and bad. Dun, who was no universalist in his theology, knew better; and he possessed in full measure the true dog's instinct for defending the home against intruders. The callers might be all right, he conceded; but they would have to prove it before he admitted them to favor; the doctrine of total (human) depravity he accepted in a modified, more kindly, modern form. If his masters, big and small, accepted these strangers, well and good, this would affect his own position: until then, *cave canem*. So, he growled.

“The hound is mild, fear him not,” quoth Ludovic, and Phil playfully cuffed the quadruped in a manner which Dun instantly interpreted to mean that a

Threë of a Kind

hostile attitude on his part was not gentlemanlike, and so, at once, resumed his wonted amiability and retired up stage — which is to say, into his comfortable corner. But the long, deep sigh with which he once more addressed himself to slumber, spoke volumes for his opinion of the outside world of persons who insisted upon butting in upon their privacy.

Mr. Redding, at the brute's first appearance, had edged nervously away from him and made a sickly attempt at jocularity, with the words:

“ Good doggie, don't you know us? ”
But now, his equilibrium restored, he braced himself for his duty: “ Have you ever thought, Mr. Heffner,” he said, “ of what will become of our young friend, here, as he grows up into manhood? ”

“ Ach, Himmel, have I not thought

The Wolf and the Dog

what will become of all of us yet? It is all in the hand of the Herr Gott, not?" was the old fiddler's answer, accompanied by a philosophic shrug of the shoulders, a whimsical spreading out of his long flexible hands, the hands of a very musician.

"Ah, very true, but what I had in mind was this: Would it not be well for the interests of the boy, as well as a — a possible relief to you, if some disposition were made of him, say in some good country family where he would grow up happy and healthy, surrounded by country sights and sounds, adopted by people who would look out for his interests in life? You would miss him, no doubt, but in your — ahem! er — cramped circumstances —"

Abruptly Ludovic rose to his full height. So abruptly in fact that he over-

Three of a Kind

turned his chair and the noise brought Dun instantaneously at charge into the middle of the room; the musician's favorite meerschaum fell to the floor, the bowl, colored lovingly to a rich chocolate brown, smashing into twenty pieces, — an accident which its owner seemed unaware of. He towered above his visitors and looked down upon them with his lined face white and working with emotion.

“ So! You think us — what you call paupers, not? You think love is for the rich alone. The child, it is my son, my son, you understand; his place, it is by me, not by strangers. I lof him out from my heart. I — ” His voice broke, he trembled where he stood.

Phil, half frightened, half indignant, stepped to his friend's side and slipped his brown hand into the musician's big

The Wolf and the Dog

firm clasp. The gesture was eloquent, passing any use of words. Dun, in the meanwhile, had planted himself stiffly by the side of his confrères. So the three faced the other two, a trinity of comrades against the representatives of the outer world, — the world of reason and cant and mistaken kindness.

Mr. Redding, nonplussed by the way his perfectly well intentioned proposition had been received, began to stammer out words of further explanation, but suddenly Ludovic's expression changed. A new thought evidently had crossed his mind; he turned to Phil:

“What say you, little Meister: *willst du mit oder bleibst du hier?*”

In his deep feeling, it was hard for him not to use the native speech.

“Will you like to go with the lady and gentlemen? or stay here by me and the

Three of a Kind

— the — dog ? ” Huskily the final words came out ; his voice was exquisitely rich and tender.

“ I’ll stay with you, big master, and with Dun. I hav’n’t no use for anybody else. Huh ! You bet I’ll stay.” And hot scorn leaped out of the boy’s clear eyes ; within them was a sort of dumb sense of injury that his guardian and friend could doubt his decision.

“ You see, the little chap, he stay ; but we both tank you, Sir and Madame, for the good thought.”

Belatedly he had a sense that he had shown but scant courtesy and the last words were in the nature of an *amende*.

Both the callers got up : their mission had failed ; they felt that any further attempt would be a thankless impertinence.

“ Good-by, Mr. Heffner, Good-by,

The Wolf and the Dog

Phil. Let us know if we can assist you in any way. Here is a card with our address." And with their hearts strangely stirred, — for they were kindly persons, as we have seen, — the two departed.

As the sound of their steps on the stairs died away, there followed a minute of embarrassment between Phil and Ludovic. Then the latter, passing his arm about the lad's shoulder, said in a voice deeper and more vibrant than usual:

"You stay by the old fiddler, hey? You give up a nice home for his sake? You don't leave me and Dun together, us two, and you go mit them two, not?" And the boy, with his dark eyes blurred a bit with tears, of which he was immensely ashamed, made a characteristic answer:

"Those guys must be clean crazy to think I'd go. I ain't stuck much on that bunch, anyhow, are you? The lady's all

Three of a Kind

right enough; but his Nibs, — I'd like to punch him in the solar plexus, like the prize-fighters do. We had 'em both guessing some. Leave you? Not in a hundred years, as long as you want me." Then with a quizzical smile, looking at the dog, who was softly whining for attention, "Three of a kind beats any old pair you can stack up, — don't it, Dun?"

And Ludovic's mellow laughter, a wholesome reaction from emotion, mingled with the affectionate barking of the dog as he poked his nose insinuatingly into the caressing hand and snuggled close to his cherished house-mates. Three of a kind they were, in very truth, and the God of us all looked not down upon a fellowship more loving or loyal in all the big, sad tangle of the town.

Thus did the mystic number remain the same, the circle was still unbroken.

VIII

FATHER AND SON



FATHER AND SON

MIDDLE December though it be, Ludovic had secured a week's engagement with the street band hastily formed to take advantage of an unusually mild spell of weather, — making outdoor work agreeable to the players and productive of curb audiences.

Several of the itinerant orchestra were

Three of a Kind

his messmates at the theatre and had sought him out when they decided to add day labor to their nightly toil. There was talk, so they told him, of a new leader at the theatre: Sternberg had been getting more and more autocratic and ugly. Two more of the best men had left, unable to endure his high-handed ways. The management was considering a change. It was likely that Ludovic would be called back to his place before long. In short, luck was turning — as it always does.

There was comfort in this news and our friend blew into the trombone with a stout heart. They were playing, in one of the aristocratic west-lying streets, the little air of Ludovic's which he had dedicated to Hilda. He had shown it to one or two of them in manuscript, telling of its coming publication; and it had so taken their fancy, that by request he had

Father and Son

copied out the score in order that they might play the unpublished piece. Ludovic was as a baby in his ignorance of literary etiquette, and the question whether, having disposed of the song, he had a right to render it in this public fashion, had never even entered his head. Was not music issuing from the loving heart of a musician a thing for the whole world's joy and refreshment and consolation, a free-will offering to mankind? Thoughts of copyright were far from him, and meanwhile the public were the beneficiaries.

As he played the song now, it seemed as if the spirit of his lost love, pleading with him for her child, hovered above his head and made the air sweet. The day, although it was dull and dark, with an almost sickly warmth to it, — the season pointed to what is known as a green

Three of a Kind

Christmas, — seemed to him beautiful and set apart from the ordinary sequence of days, because of this private and precious experience.

Phil had gone gleefully to work after his enforced idleness; once more he stood at his corner, limping a little still, but full of life, and Dun by his side was more alert than ever to seize a paper in his jaws and on his hind legs hold it up temptingly to the passers-by; few could resist this image of an animal rampant, particularly now, when many of Phil's old customers were glad to welcome back dog and boy. Frequent had been the inquiries concerning him while he was laid up: the boy by his brightness and good cheer, and the unique feature of his assistant, had really won a considerable clientele. So to-day his store of change grew apace and fairly bulged his pockets.

Father and Son

To Dun, upon whom the enforced sequestration of Phil's accident had been hard, it was pure bliss to be again in the open and at the work which had in it for him the blithe essence of play. During the slow weeks when his master was immured, he had scarcely averaged a walk a day, chaperoned by Ludovic, in place of the free run of the streets, and had really suffered from this short tether. Albeit he was regarded as a perfectly trustworthy member of the top-room trinity, the others had not felt quite like turning him loose to run at will about the city. For in spite of the fact that Dun had pretty well outgrown his earlier gypsy instinct to wander and lose himself in the mazes of outdoors, there had been one or two anxious occasions when he had disappeared from mortal view and remained

Three of a Kind

invisible all day — once indeed, for over night — returning a wretchedly bedraggled apology for a dog, dirty beyond description, tired to the last degree, hungry as one of his ancestral wolves — but, though expectant of a flogging, perfectly happy alike over his outing and his home-coming: a fearful and divided joy.

So now, with every inch of him active, he yelped delight at such moments as his mouth was not filled with the daily news, and in a sense other than metaphoric, gamboled on the green: for Phil's post was hard by the Common, just where the little stations of the Subway belch forth or swallow up the throngs of city folk and above them looms the tower of the quaint old church that has long gazed down upon those motley processions of mankind.

Dun's pride, too, was immense when, as occasionally happened, somebody bent

Father and Son

down to give him a pat expressive of satisfaction that he had returned to his place: then would gratitude exude from every pore of his being. He was almost too uplifted to do his work with the proper attention to prose details.

The day was a busy one for them both, and the time sped fast. Before Phil could have believed it, the hands of the old clock, already dimming in the dusk, pointed to after five; business was at its height and the thoroughfare densely thronged; but before very long now, they could go home. Phil was not sorry, for he began to discover that his foot ached from unaccustomed use; he was very weary and the big room under the eaves loomed up alluringly to his imagination.

Suddenly, a short way down the teeming street, he heard familiar sounds. A

Three of a Kind

street band broke forth into a popular air of the moment and the usual curb-lined crowd assembled as if by magic. He thought he knew the swelling notes of the trombone player, and looking hard at the musicians, he recognized Ludovic; evidently the violinist had so manoeuvred his day as to end his work beside the boy, so that they might go home together on this, Phil's first return to the world as a wage-earner.

“Hullo, Ludy! All right, we'll be ready,” he cried, waving his slip of a cap.

But at that moment, the band ceased to play in the middle of a gay passage; confused cries rose in the air, there was a rapid melting away of the crowd about the orchestra; a wildly galloping horse with the remnants of a wagon clattering at his heels, dashed along the street, swaying ominously from side to side, and

Father and Son

making direct for where Phil stood. His first thought was for Ludovic, but almost before he could realize it, the runaway was upon him. Disabled as he was, he had but just time to jump aside and drag Dun from under the very heels of the flying animal, whose mad onward course down the thoroughfare was marked by the wreckage he left behind and the lane he opened between the frightened masses of people: no intrepid hero was on hand to check the flight, and soon the crowd closed in upon his trail and shut away from sight his further fate.

Phil's energetic dodging of danger had thrown him asprawl on the pavement and from his two pockets had poured the takings of the day: coppers and silver pieces in an undistinguishable mass rolled off in all directions, and the newsboy, unharmed but alarmed at the loss of his treasure,

Three of a Kind

scrambled on all fours after the money. Luckily, perhaps, those near him still had their attention taken up by the runaway. Ludovic, too, had seen his plight, and the old musician's heart stood still when Phil barely pulled himself and the dog out of the jaws of possible death; for a little more and the horse's hoofs might have beaten him into a shapeless huddle of insensibility. Now, with a cheery word and an encouraging pat on the shoulder, he bent down to help the boy recover his scattered property. Soon, other kindly persons, seeing his predicament, lent their assistance: it is worth noticing as a phase of city life, that when money is thus at the mercy of a multitude, it is rarely stolen: the better side of human nature seems to be appealed to by the misfortune of a fellow man, and the onlookers, whether prosperous mer-

Father and Son

chant or barefooted hobo, are all moved to helpfulness in the righting of the trouble. It was so in this case. In a very few minutes Phil, aided in his search by half a dozen impromptu friends, was peering in the gutter for a few sporadic bits of money, with the main part of his possessions snugly stowed away about his person.

As Ludovic picked up the coin, he had come upon one which had at once riveted his attention; his eyes dilated when he saw it first, and he stood as if transfixed a moment, then slipped it meditatively into his coat. The coin in question was easily differentiated from the rest of the fractional pieces by its peculiar shape and composition; plainly it was some sort of foreign money, out of place among the practical American change. The old man was very tender in a musing way as

Three of a Kind

they took the car for home and then walked the necessary final blocks; Phil chattering of his good luck in escaping harm, of Dun's carriage during the day, — of how fine it had seemed to be at work again.

“Gee,” was his exclamation, as he stopped short on their onward way, seized by the thought: “Gee, but I was scared, big master, when the trotter struck his gait and headed for me. Here goes little Phillie for fair, I says to myself. I thought Dun was in the soup too. A little more and we'd both of us been all in. And on top of that, I had to lose my mun too!” Unconsciously, the lad moved closer to the towering, silent figure at his side.

To his outpourings, Ludovic returned but abstracted answers, though his manner was sympathy itself: his eyes had

Father and Son

the faraway, luminous look they put on when he was hearing his favorite music or was ruminating on the past: something now had transported him thither. They reached their lodging and slowly, wearily, climbed the stairs, — those flights seemed formidable at the day's end, especially to limping Phil.

In a few moments, pleasant odors of supper penetrated from the miniature kitchen to the homely living-room: for the violinist had stopped twice on the homeward journey to purchase articles of food more delectable than usual, that Phil's supper and next morning meal might be full of savor. With the lamp lighted and the evening pipe aglow, Ludovic, when supper was out of the way, went behind the screen and drew out the antique box; then seated himself in the arm-chair and slowly lifted Hilda's yel-

Three of a Kind

low-paged letter from its resting-place and took from beneath it the old Hessian coin: his hand trembled a little, his breath came quicker; there was a blur over his eyes.

Meanwhile, Phil, cosily ensconced in a corner, with Dun as interested spectator, since sleep had not yet overcome him, had spread out on the floor the gains of the day and was "counting out his money," like the king in the Mother Goose rhyme. And Ludovic, slowly, his hand still shaking with a palsy not of the body, took from his pocket the stray coin of Phil's which he had picked up in the street that day. Side by side in his palm he set the two pieces; they were identical!

The old musician's head sank low, his eyes closed, his pipe, laid on the arm of his chair, went out unnoticed. For a little

Father and Son

space he sat absorbed in memories that surged upon him in waves like the coming in of a tide, higher and higher over his heart. But the gleam of a great joy was breaking through his revery: even as upon those same tidal waters, the strong, sweet light of a sun irradiates its depths. At last, he raised his head and once more gazed at the piece of money which had found its way into Phil's possession. Then he grew tenser, he bent again close over the coin. In a moment his whole body became rigid, high-strung as his beloved fiddle when it was ready to speak out its very soul in sound. Scratched faintly, yet quite legibly upon the face of the bit of money was a name — yes, *Herr Jesu*, the name of Hilda! This second piece out of dear old Hessia had been hers, even as had the first. They were duplicates; the proof, was it not complete?

Three of a Kind

Phil, Phil, his dear, his trusty little comrade was —

His voice broke the silence of the room, where hitherto the only sound was the chink, chink of Phil's money or the snap of Dun's jaw as he tried to entomb a belated fly. That voice from the arm-chair was so deep, so richly freighted with feeling, that the lad sitting among his money pieces hardly recognized it as his name was called :

“ Phil, mein Kind, come thou here to me. I have somewhat to say to thee.”

Wonderingly, the newsboy approached : he felt the psychic atmosphere as well as if he had been fine-languaged in its expression.

“ Where got you this *Geld* ? ”

“ Why, where did you get that, big master ? It was in my bank, see, and I took it out yesterday to ask if it was —

Father and Son

Dutch or what? O, I catch on: it got spilled with the rest of 'em and you pinched it, hey?"

The boy smiled his frank winning smile and reached out his hand for the odd old piece.

"But where came it from — how long hast thou had it?"

"Why, I always had it — long as I can remember." Phil's eye darkened, for he felt the suppressed excitement of the musician's manner, although he was still mystified.

Ludovic felt that he knew it all now. A holy duty was laid upon him by the curious workings of fate; a duty that was made precious and beautiful by love — his love for Hilda and for Phil. Her words in her letter crept caressingly into his mind, and softly he repeated them now:

Three of a Kind

“And my little boy babe here beside me — would to God he could find you! Then he would have a friend for my sake.” For her sake, yes, but also for his own, for the sake of his lonesome father-heart that might now be filled and satisfied. A mighty cry burst from Ludovic. He rose, stretched out his arms wide to the handsome boy before him and spoke with an indescribable yearning in his tone:

“Mein Sohn, my boy, come to me, thou art Hilda’s child. I will be — I am — thy father. *Gott Sei Dank!* After many years — after many years!” and the dazed yet shaken Phil was gathered into an embrace that reclaimed the street waif forever from his homeless estate and set him safe in the harborage of a good man’s long-starved love.

An hour later, when he understood it all and Ludovic’s emotions had quieted down

Father and Son

into a glad peace, the throb of the violin filled the pleasant evening room; he was playing a melody of Chopin's, the Thirteenth Prelude; a composition which, among all those created by the sons of genius, expresses perhaps most completely the exquisite gradations of sadness and longing and utter content, and whose deep calm chords are therefore like a dropping of frankincense and myrrh and all soothing ointments upon the perturbed spirit of our passions and our griefs.

IX
A PAIR OF MUMMERS



A PAIR OF MUMMERS

THE Newsboys' Protective Association (with constitution and by-laws duly drawn up by a lawyer employed expressly for the purpose) was fired by a great ambition. They proposed to produce a drama for the benefit of the organization. Most of their members were confirmed

Three of a Kind

theatre-goers and revelled in the mimic passions of the stage. Indeed, the Italian contingent among these knights of the newspaper had their own marionette playhouse, where they might listen any evening to the epic history of the loves and wars of the heroes of their race. Others haunted the vaudeville galleries or were habitués of the melodrama, and all loved the "show" as a form of entertainment. They had most definite ideas as to the right conductment of a drama and their judgments were of a spotless morality.

Moreover, a general interest in the actor's art and the significance of the theatre as an educational institution, was in the air among all classes at the time, and even these Arabs of the paper industry had caught the contagion. They were aided and abetted in their laudable

A Pair of Mummers

desire by the sundry Mission Chapels and Social Settlements with which they were, perforce, in touch. The charming young ladies who conducted these philanthropic efforts, were eager to exhibit the histrionic ability of their " boys " in good plays, as a civilizing influence upon the youngsters and an innocent means of enlisting the interest of their fashionable friends in work dear to their hearts, and perhaps swelling the exchequer of some worthy charity. Theatricals, in a word, were distinctly the thing, and sociology and society linked hands in the cause. Talk of a people's theatre was heard on every hand; those who called the play-house *the-ayter* were no less enthusiastic than those who affected Ibsen and Shaw, and were studious of the modern technique and teaching.

So, the newsboys had decided to enter

Three of a Kind

the dramatic field themselves, and quite independent of other influence, aid or direction. They rejected with some hauteur an attempt on the part of pretty Miss Arlington of the Bow Street settlement to get them to enact a dramatization, cleverly made by herself, of Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper," preferring to concoct or otherwise procure their own dramatic vehicle and put on the play themselves. It was with just a touch of patronage that they informed Miss Arlington, to whom they were absolutely devoted, that at some future time it would be their pleasure to coöperate with her in such an undertaking: at present they had other fish to fry. Deep down in their very human hearts lay the wish to show the upper world that when it came to bona-fide dramatic gift, the boy of the street was no second-class article.

A Pair of Mummers

“ If dey can beat dat,” remarked one of their number who had been conducting a rehearsal of the coming play, during which his time had been equally divided between watching the stage and the entrance door to see that no one “ did a sneak ” and so anticipated the raptures of two weeks hence: “ If dey can beat dat, dey’ll have to be goin’ some. Hully gee, it was fine when Dun got the word and come tru de wall,” — which remark will have more meaning as we come to describe the histrionic offering.

From the first, Phil had been prominent in the association councils concerning this plan. He had been appointed one of a Committee of Five to select the drama of the evening, and had been regarded, as a matter of course, as one of the actors from whom to make up the cast. Shivers had run up and down the Association’s

Three of a Kind

spine lest the lad's accident should interfere with his availability for their purposes; there had been a postponement of date until he should be happily recovered. For Phil had proved his capacity in a previous performance, when, as a swash-buckler German baron who had rescued a *Mädchen* from the machinations of a nest of robbers in the nick of time, he had aroused intense enthusiasm at a mission entertainment. But there was another reason for giving him a leading part: namely, he was the master, or joint master, of Dun. The whole dramatic venture had been planned in order that the dog, so to express it, might be the protagonist of the piece. The literary hack who had been hired to write the drama (for in all the printed plays nothing could be found to answer their needs), had received explicit and emphatic instructions to make

A Pair of Mummers

it center in and about Phil's four-footed friend. Hence, in "Walled up Alive; or a Dog to the Rescue" the eternal principles of dramaturgy had been deemed quite secondary to this desired end: an end, it may be added, attained by the playwright entirely to the satisfaction of the Newsboys' Protective Association, as represented by the Committee of Five. Phil in particular was fairly dazzled by the opportunity for a climactic scene offered him and Dun by the dramatist. The boys had paid the latter fifteen dollars for his work without the slightest expression of criticism over an excessive charge, albeit it was rumored that the rival bootblacks had once secured a to-order play at a figure that (this was darkly whispered) made the fifteen dollars seem plutocratic. But the newsboys fell complacently back upon the thought

Three of a Kind

that if you want a good thing, you must pay for it.

An Odd Fellows' Hall, with walls embellished in such spectacular wise as to threaten rivalry with what might be displayed upon the stage, had been secured at half rates for the evening; rehearsals were in order, costumes were being discussed and planned; Phil had had several deliberations with Ludovic about his make-up and dress, and had found the German's advice invaluable. Ludovic, by the way, had not only promised to play the fiddle on the great night, but to secure the aid of two other musicians, friends of his, both of whom, he engaged should, like himself, tender their services free. The newsboys swelled with pride at Phil's announcement of this news. With a hired piano player and a gratis fiddle, 'cello and flute to assist him, they would

A Pair of Mummers

have an orchestra to make competing entertainments green with jealousy: the Arcanum of United Bootblacks, for example, an effete organization of (very) young men with dirty hands and too active mouths, who actually had the effrontery to hold their meetings in the same Odd Fellows' Hall — though, it hardly is necessary to add, not on the same night of the week.

To say that Dun welcomed this opportunity for histrionic display would be understatement: he revelled in it. If this chronicle has already conveyed the idea that he was an ultra-modest animal, such has not been the author's intention. Not that Dun was an egotist; not at all. But who, whether man or beast, could suddenly be lifted into the dizzy position of leading man of a promising company without some effect upon his *amour*

Three of a Kind

propre? It went to Dun's head — and tail. He was frantically important and importunate at rehearsals and was restrained only by force from assuming all the other parts besides his own. His main fault as a Thespian was this tendency to over-act: in the expressive if inelegant parlance of the boards, he inclined to “hog” his part; he wished to take the center of the stage all the time. To make this plainer, the plot of the proposed play may now be outlined.

The scene was laid in Italy; perhaps the Italian influence in the Association had something to do with the setting, for the playwright had been so instructed; but over and beyond this, the locale appealed to those concerned as being far away, picturesque, romantic. We all know the potency of the poetry of the past, and newsboys are only human beings in

A Pair of Mummers

this respect. Italy offered superlative opportunities for costume and scenery, and there was to be no stinting in these particulars. A brand new drop scene showing a dismal mountain gorge as an environment for banditti, was being painted expressly for this production by Joe Hannis, whose pictorial labors were alternately devoted to the drama and the painting of signs when orders for the former work languished. For the play's climax, which demanded the dungeon cell of a castle, a proper scene had been luckily found ready to hand in the store room of a stock company house. As for wardrobe, a costumer had been given carte blanche to fit out the drama.

The story — for after all, the play's the thing — dealt with the attempt to kidnap Francia Frigoletti (Phil), a high-born, beautiful lad brought up by and

Three of a Kind

living with humble peasants as their dear son. The villain of the piece, learning of his aristocratic birth, conceives the highly original scheme of stealing the boy and, while he is in durance vile, communicating with his lawful parents and demanding a goodly sum of money for his return, when the proof of his origin has been submitted.

But when the much abused Francia is thus confined in a dungeon deep and dark, piteously unaware of what it is all about, his favorite dog — ha ! don't you hear the tremolo in the orchestra, as the situation is about to begin to draw near ? — his dog, who has been rather charily introduced in the earlier pastoral scenes for fear that in his zeal he would anticipate the climax, has scented his way for weary miles from peasant hut to donjon keep (that is understood to be the proper

A Pair of Mummers

expression), and under his unerring guidance the sturdy peasant with a band of good neighbors is hammering on the thick wall of the tower (another name for the donjon keep) wherein Francia is trying to sleep. It is the deep of night — which is a habit with these rescue scenes. After the noise has gone on awhile, Francia not unnaturally wakes up; in fact, the only unnatural thing is that he is unconscious so long under the circumstances. No doubt he is overwrought with long vigils. Once awake, tremblingly he awaits the issue. Is it rescue? Mayhap his enemies are come to torture him! He says some words to that effect. Hardly could he speak because of the suspense. But good cheer, little Francia, it is always darkest just before day: which is to say, it is always noisiest just before the climax. List! That sound,

Three of a Kind

was't not a dog's bark? Louder, clearer, it comes from the other side of the wall. God in heaven, they are nearly through the massy stone! But now, silence; a cessation of sound. Can it be they have quit? Francia lifts imploring hands to the (stage) skies that blackly loom above saint and sinner alike — except in melodrama. No! they are at it again. Now, see! a brick falls in. Two, three, many bricks. A hole! Then a bigger hole, a murmur of voices; louder and yet louder. Fortissimo from the orchestra. And then — what is this? Yes, no, yes, it *is* a faithful dog (the brickiest brick of them all) who squirms his way through the orifice as yet too small for the human body, and with frantic barks leaps upon the stage — we mean the horrid, damp floor of the dungeon — and rushes to Francia. The boy on his knees embraces

A Pair of Mummers

his brute savior, who covers his face with kisses and fairly writhes with ecstasy and doggy pride. In pour the rescuing humans — the hole becoming large enough with suspicious promptness: they range themselves in the proper attitude, the peasant father to the fore. Tableau!

It was the firm conviction of all concerned, based upon the effect pulled off at the rehearsals, that this scene would sweep the house. Certainly it would make or break the play.

Of course the rest is easy to guess. The peasant has secured the birth proof — how, is the dramatist's business — a mere detail, — from the kidnapper villain. He takes Francia to his select parents, receives an enormous reward for his honesty (the dramatist recks not for stage money), Francia becomes a little nobleman with a hair-cut and frills on his shirt

Three of a Kind

front. An arrangement is made (Heaven forbid that the noble peasant, his faithful wife and the little Sylvia, their daughter, who loved Francia so tenderly, should be bereaved of their son-brother-lover forever), whereby Francia shall spend four months of every blessed year with his dear foster parents: the other eight being devoted to real high life. It is even hinted, at the final curtain, by the playwright, who has a splendid heart, whatever his lapses in technique, that some day (with apologies to Signor Tosti and lyric strains from the orchestra of three) Francia and Sylvia may be wedded, honest worth win out, love triumph over rank, true hearts prove more than coronets, and several other mottoes to the same general effect.

We trust that the merits of this bit of dramaturgy, its firm grasp upon the feel-

A Pair of Mummers

ings of its auditor, are sufficiently apparent from this anticipatory sketch.

And now we come to the great evening itself. Everything promised brilliant success. The actors had worked over time and were letter-perfect in their parts two days before the performance — a most unusual condition of affairs in amateur theatricals. The long labor of Phil with Dun had resulted better even than they had dared to hope. The sagacious little fellow went through his allotted tasks like clockwork. It has been said that animals, — horses in battle, for example, — when once they have learned the mechanism of their duty, can be trusted to carry it through more smoothly than men. So it seemed in the case of Dun.

It had been unanimously decided to dispense with the usual full-dress rehearsal, on the ground of avoiding the

Three of a Kind

extra expense. They were to have a professional to make them up, and with the stage properly set, went through the piece to perfection without the preliminary use of grease paints, wigs and all the glitter of mediaeval garb.

The Odd Fellows' Hall bore a festive aspect ten minutes before the curtain rose on that memorable night. Seats had sold beyond desire's fondest dreams. The actors were on the *qui vive* of excitement, the audience scarcely less so. Behind the curtain, the young players had to be warned from poking their fingers and noses through the green baize in the mad wish to count the attendance or recognize friends. The newsboy colony had been that day so distraught to life's ordinary occupations, that false change was freely made, and several youngsters had absent-mindedly called morning edi-

A Pair of Mummers

tions after twelve o'clock. The one person who exhibited all the tonic of wholesome excitement without the flurry and worry usually incident thereto was Dun. It is one of the many advantages of man's superior intellect, that while the brutes get the fun unalloyed with fear, Man, his younger brother, because of his wretched habit of self-consciousness, must have his bad quarter of an hour whenever he aspires to do something well and consequently doubts his ability to do it. Dun had no doubts, no fears. He could act, and he knew it; and he loved it better than eating.

Society was fully represented on the occasion. There were high lights of costume scattered through the house, one heard a frou frou of fans, and was aware of the delicate aroma of full dress. Not charitable motives alone but the unique

Three of a Kind

touch given by the presence of a dog in the cast had stimulated interest and increased the attendance. This element was confined to the impromptu boxes, and the high-priced front seats. For the rest, the Newsboys' Protective Association in serried rows taxed the place to its capacity. Perhaps the house was the larger because of a ten-stroke in the way of advance advertising: a poster in three colors which displayed Dun's flying leap through the wall in the great rescue scene. True, the bill-board artist had departed broadly from the accepted (not to say acceptable) cocker physiognomy; in fact, there had been some debates among the boys whether the animal as exhibited would pass for a cat or a dog. Fears had been stilled, however, by a remark of Billy Sales to the effect that any chump 'd know as how no cat couldn't rescue no-

A Pair of Mummers

body, not even if the party had cream on his whiskers. Besides, didn't the secondary name of the piece, "A Dog to the Rescue," indicate the species of the animal? It was felt that Billy's logic was irrefutable, and doubtful physiology ruled supreme from the bill-boards.

At last came that rapt moment before the rise of the curtain. The tension was so acute it could almost be handled and seen. Ludovic, tuning up in the diminutive but loyal orchestra, after playing the overture, confessed, sotto voce, to considerable nervousness. How will Phil conduct himself? Can Dun be trusted with his cue? Hush! The green baize rises to reveal the mimic world behind it. There is the usual pleasurable buzz through the house; but this deepens until it swells into uproarious applause when all eyes have taken in the neat little hut of

Three of a Kind

Francia's bogus parents, set in a thick boskage — a convenient word we borrow from Spenser — before which are discovered Francia and Sylvia, who embrace lovingly as they sit upon a nice mossy log beside a purling stream. We hasten to add that Sylvia is played by the aforementioned Mr. Sales, who, to decided dramatic aptitude, adds the valuable stage asset of a pink and white prettiness which was the bane of his life and the cause of constant guying from his fellows.

As for Francia, — really, you never would have known him. His velvet cloak, plumed hat, silver-buckled shoes and black silk stockings, his rouge and grease paint, and, crowning feature, his beautiful blonde wig, changed him so completely that even his chums failed at first to recognize him and Ludovic from his point of vantage in the orchestra was puzzled

A Pair of Mummers

for a moment. It may be interpolated here that for the son of a peasant the above costume does not seem congruous. But please do justice to the playwright: he wishes to indicate to the audience, pictorially, through the medium of clothes, much as Wagner indicates personality by the use of the *leit-motiv* in the world of tone, that this is no common boy; he would have his aristocratic birth shine through his humble surroundings, — and how secure this result better than by dressing the part? Besides, Sylvia, who is only a woman, likes him all the more for his little Lord Fauntleroy knee-breeches.

The play proceeds. Everything goes smoothly. The young mummers' remarkably fine work is commented on by the fashionable auditors; in especial do they praise its natural quality, its freedom

Three of a Kind

from self-consciousness. The touch in the first act where Sylvia places a basket of lunch in Dun's mouth as she and Phil start for a day's excursion in a near-by rocky gorge (where, of course, the abduction is to take place — you have got to get them there somehow, and what more natural than a picnic *à trois*, — Sylvia, Francia and Dun?), this early incident of the drama elicited such strong approval as would have made a Building Commission fear for the integrity of the floors. The lights seemed fairly to twinkle with the clamor. There was no doubt about it, Dun as a player was to be the hit of the piece. It was noticed, however, at this point by those who were cool and analytic (always a pitiable few in a theatre) that the dog revealed a curious inability to pick out his friends on the stage, unless he came near enough to smell them.

A Pair of Mummers

In the second act, the abduction took place, *con brio*, as the musicians would say. Understand that this is a five-act drama; our dramatist did not propose to earn his money easy, cheating his patrons by any of the new-fangled Ibsen device of three acts and out. Not he. He gave full measure, after the good old romantic formula; he believed that it takes five acts to make a play quite as truly as it takes nine tailors to make a man. The second act, then, passed off with great smoothness; it contained a very pathetic scene near the close, where the bereft girl, flanked by her parents, cries her eyes out at the loss of her dear little mate, and the dog pokes his nose sympathetically into her hand, after wandering about the stage from person to person, again rather vaguely, as if not quite sure of his bearings. Before this spectacle,

Three of a Kind

more than one hardened urchin was moved to the snivels; a well known society woman was heard in the stressed stillness to declare that "it was really charming — quite touching and novel, you know," — for which, not being at the Opera, she was, to her very great surprise, promptly hissed.

Act third, dealt with the robbers in their fastnesses and displayed their cruel maltreatment of Francia prior to his incarceration and abandonment. It wrought the newsboys to such a pitch of righteous wrath that a descent from the gallery for the purpose of setting right the evil that men do seemed imminent; if the playwright couldn't manage it, the gallery could. However, they restrained themselves, and nothing worse than a storm of hisses, stampings and cat calls greeted the fall of the curtain after the

A Pair of Mummers

exit of the banditti, leaving the boy in his lonely prison cell.

Then, at last, came the fourth act, with its earth-shaking situation, the crescendo and climax of all their efforts for strenuous weeks. Thus far, all had gone to admiration. The players had outdone themselves, there had been no hitch or mishap with the scenery, rarely had the voice of the prompter been heard in the land. Now for the big rescue scene. Francia-Phil, on a settle at left, drooped in anguish at the weird midnight hour. Suddenly, he lifted his head. Presciently, he has become aware of some sound without, at first too faint for the audience to hear, — ah, both actor and audience hear it now: A dull recurrent *thud, thud, thud*. Then the “business” of fear, despair, hope in alternation was admirably depicted by Francia-Phil. When the first bark came,

Three of a Kind

you could feel the thrill go all over the house. One young man of over-vaulting imagination hurrahs in advance, to be vigorously squelched by those nearest.

The great moment has come. Francia-Phil is up from his seat; looking eagerly towards the part of the wall at back center which seems to be shaken by the mysterious onslaught. In tumble the bricks, the aperture is exposed, and Dun, urged as usual from behind, and willing as ever, half leaps, half tumbles upon the stage. And then — horrors ! The best-laid plans of men and mummers gang aft agley. Instead of rushing to Phil as he had steadily done at rehearsals, the little black cocker (looking oh, so black with the spot light full on him) stands as though dazed ; he blinks at the footlights, which are absolutely a new effect to him ; he looks to the stranger at left ; he half hears Ludovic's

A Pair of Mummers

low, pleading voice in front: "Go thou to him, Dun, bleibst nicht da," and it but adds to his confusion. Alas, *that omitted dress rehearsal!* Phil in paint and powder, is not his Phil at all; he does not go near enough to scent his young master. Even the other's fierce calls to him are drowned out by the mad fortissimo of the orchestra playing up to the climax. And so, after one awful moment of wavering wonder, Dun turns sideways and legs it for the flies, and then, amidst a confusion of cries and stage directions, the curtain is dropped.

All the same, although Phil is openly crying in his dressing room, and Dun, crouching beside him is cognizant of the fact that something is all wrong, he does not quite know what, the fiasco has made a hit in its way with the house. The parquet rocks with laughter. The tiers

Three of a Kind

hoot their delight. For, be it remembered, the audience is not aware of the eclat of the climax as planned; to it, the touch of nature shown by a dog dazed by being thrust into the dazzle of the footlights — to say nothing of being ejected through a four-foot wall — is of itself worth the price of admission. Round after round of applause compelled Phil, with his hand at the collar of his reluctant companion, and feeling full as sheepish himself, to appear and bow his thanks for them both. And the happy ending of the fifth and final act, which was a miracle of smoothness, sent everybody home happy: once more in these degenerate days a playwright, in his manipulation of events, stood forth as opposed to the newer fashion of misery as a means of pleasure. The Newsboys' Protective Association too, when it came to estimate

A Pair of Mummers

its receipts, was gleeful over the substantial sum of upwards of two hundred dollars in its treasury.

But the iron had entered Phil's soul. In spite of the warm praise that fell to him from the lips of his fellows and in the columns of newspapers, it was days and weeks before he could recover from a sense of mortification at the *contretemps* in act four of "Walled up Alive." If they could only have seen Dun in rehearsals, he would say to himself as he was dropping off to sleep; and perhaps, though he did not so express it, he reflected that eternal vigilance is the price of all good art.

Meanwhile, Dun, stretched at length on his prayer rug, slept the dreamless sleep of the just and blamed himself not a bit for what had happened. Indeed, when you come to think of it, why should he,

Three of a Kind

when it was the fault of others? Had they but accustomed him to Francia plume-hatted and becloaked, all had been well. And Dun drew a deeper, intercostal breath and rolled over into a more comfortable position for slumber.

X

CHRISTMAS EVE



CHRISTMAS EVE

A REMARKABLE metamorphosis was to be observed in the top-floor apartment inhabited by Mr. Ludovic Heffner, Master Phil Heffner, and Master Dun Heffner. The family was "at home" — very much at home. It was not so much a coming-out party as a going-out party. For it

Three of a Kind

was Christmas Eve, and the musician, radiant in his new-come joy and filled with the idea not only of properly celebrating the dear season — the *heiliger Abend* of his native land — but also the return of their good fortune and the finding of a son, had been planning for a week or more for this evening's entertainment. Phil had most ably coöperated in the preparations, and now, arrayed in their best, they awaited the event that should repay all their labor.

The dining-table was pushed aside from the middle place it usually occupied, and in its stead towered a splendiferous Christmas tree, fittingly decked with spangles and wax candles: pendent from its boughs of rich green hung various packages gaily done up in tri-colored paper and really making a brave show in the dancing fire-light (a truly holiday

Christmas Eve

blaze came from the deep-bosomed hearth) and from the extra gas illumination. Considering the resources of the house of Heffner and the seemingly limited number of beneficiaries it boasted, the general display impressed you as almost overwhelming. The apartment was wondrously swept and garnished, and you could but note that spick-and-span neatness which is the delight of a certain kind of woman soul, but the despair of easy-going bachelordom. For once in a way, however, that truly feminine effect had been striven for strenuously and successfully in a place not, as a rule, conspicuous for such ideals. Perhaps Ludovic thus compounded with his conscience for past sins.

Sprigs of holly and bright bunches of hawthorn were stuck about the room in all available coigns of vantage; on the

Three of a Kind

table reposed a fat jolly looking beer keg, the spigot ready to turn, flanked by sundry hospitable mugs and steins: edibles of a strictly German complexion were also spread upon the kindly board, which, if it did not groan with these dainties, remained silent only because, in our unimaginative days, tables are not so vocal as in the dear old Past. Here were ranged the black bread and pumpernickel of their host's affection; together with *Schinken*, *Leberwurst*, a glorious potato salad — the *pièce de resistance* of the repast — and *Kuchen* of various kinds and special relishes particularly loved by the violinist; it was obvious from the amount and variety of the viands, to say nothing of their markedly Teutonic tendency, that company was expected.

As master of the revels the musician wore a long black coat seen only upon gala

Christmas Eve

occasions, and a frilled white shirt which, with its rolling Byronic collar, was very becoming to its possessor. A fresh white nosegay was in his button-hole, and with his dark eloquent face beneath its nimbus of ample gray hair he looked foreign, distinguished, certainly point device in his attire.

Phil's face shone with an extra scrubbing and he moved a little consciously in a neat suit, too new to be altogether comfortable, but worn with a sort of happy martyrdom.

But the expression of Christmas sentiment found its culmination, its very apotheosis, in the person of Dun. A brand new and very shiny silver collar circled his neck and (to his secret embarrassment, though he strove hard to carry it off with a nonchalance as who should say: "We do it every day!") branching

Three of a Kind

antler-like from the collar were tiny sprigs of holly; while, as if this were not enough, a streamer of intertwined red and white ribbon trailed therefrom sideways along the floor, to the imminent risk of tripping the dog or of being torn off in his gyrations. Against such mishap he was watched by Phil with the eye of a lynx for any sign of distress.

When at the elect hour of six-thirty (for several of the guests had evening occupations) the first knock came, Dun was set by the table on his hind legs and, as part of a program painfully rehearsed between him and Phil through the previous week, began to paw in welcome to the arriving guests, accompanying this gesture by a polite bark: never more proudly did a lackey of fashion call names at the drawing-room door of the great. The guests in turn gravely responded by shak-

Christmas Eve

ing Dun's forepaw. First to come were several of Phil's cronies of the newspaper fraternity; pleasant-faced youngsters, in spite of their immersement in news-horrors: all of them on the *qui vive* at the rumor that their friend had found not only a protector but parent, and unhesitatingly preferring this "bid" to others of a more aristocratic nature: to wit, large Christmas spreads offered to their kind *en masse*, but with less personal compliment in the invitation and a suspicious taint of "charity" in the motive.

Close upon their heels came the oldsters: half a dozen of Ludovic's associates in music, whether of The Thalia or the street band; bearded sons of Deutschland, rubicund, merry, sonorous-voiced, talking incessantly in the native tongue, which was exchanged for English more or less broken as they were introduced

Three of a Kind

with much ceremony to the newsboys. As for Dun, he appeared supremely happy whether addressed in English or German, — a truly polyglot animal.

At once the room rang with cheerful noise. Holy-night greetings flew thick and fast and the boys, abashed no whit by the presence of members of the *Musik-Verein*, several of whom were already familiar to them as street players, gathered about Phil and Dun as a centre, and, in their shrill, eager young voices discussed life in terms of their daily experience. In an assemblage more fashionable there might have been some difficulty in the mingling of such disparate elements; not so here, — for no one had a position to maintain. They were come with the common object of a jovial time and in the spirit of fellowship. Several of the lads might have been seen

Christmas Eve

sidling surreptitiously up to Ludovic and conveying from their pockets into his keeping, certain small packages, which at the first opportunity were then tied on to the tree by the host, whose face, during this service of loving-kindness, was a study in genial contentment. The air was soon blue with tobacco smoke which (perhaps happily from a non-Germanic point of view) dominated the odors arising from the table dainties already described.

It had been Ludovic's original intention to impersonate Santa Claus — the well loved Kriss Kringle of his youth: and a glorious Santa would he have made, beyond peradventure; he looked the part even without a makeup. He had thought to dispense the presents thus, after the manner approved by the nations and the centuries. But this part of the program had been modified because of Dun, who,

Three of a Kind

as has been hitherto hinted, had been specially coached to produce the novelty of the evening.

In one corner of the room congratulations were being heaped upon the violinist, who had that very 'day' been notified of his re-appointment at The Thalia, the engagement to begin with the New Year — much to the satisfaction of his confrères: their hearty *prosits* when the beer was broached (there were soft drinks for the boys), bespoke the genuine good-will with which they would welcome back their music-mate. Sternberg's retirement evoked hearty commendation. One round and rosy man, drawing Ludovic aside a moment, and laying his fat finger in a gesture full of dark mystery on the side of a nose which was the color pivot of his face, whispered: "Und dey will some day, vielleicht, have a leader mit de

Christmas Eve

name of Heffner, what you say? *Gott im Himmel nochmal!*” which was followed by a poke in the ribs that made the musician wince, though he smiled broadly upon the kindly old gossip.

A shrill chorus of laughter from another corner where the younger guests clustered around Dun as a storm-centre, now drew general attention; the poor beast, driven almost frantic by his unaccustomed decoration, had made a bold sally for liberty; the last straw to endure had been an extra piece of gay ribbon tied around his charmingly curled tail by a mischievous fellow, who had learned before this that Dun was as sensitive about liberties taken with his caudal appendage, as is a Chinaman with regard to his pig-tail. So now the animal was alternately chasing himself in dizzy circles and madly trying to pry off with his front paws the offending

Three of a Kind

head-gear. It was necessary for Phil to administer several amelioratory chocolate drops, before even temporary peace could be restored and Dun conclude philosophically that his Christmas embellishments were a necessary part of the evening's festal character.

But now Ludovic, stationing himself near the tree, clapped his hands for order; and a hush of silence fell upon the room.

"Well, my friends," he said, "we have a few leedle gifts to distribute; nothing much, *das ist wahr*, but a token of the day for you all together. And Phil, *verstehen Sie wohl*, he is — what you call Master of the Ceremonies." And with a bow so courteous that a Beau Brummel might have turned in his grave for envy, he waved the boy to his place and stepped aside.

Phil, his eyes glistening, at once took up his station beside the seasonable tree,

Christmas Eve

which was now at full candle-power, a blaze of light, and called briskly, "Dun, get a present!" Whereupon, to the complete amazement of the musicians and newsboys, the dog, who had for some minutes been held in leash with difficulty, his tail violently demonstrative, rushed to the tree, and rising to a human posture, plucked off from one of the lower branches a ribbon, to which a gift was attached: then held it up to Phil, who read the name and handed it to the proper recipient, as he stepped out to take it.

At the successful accomplishment of this feat for the first time, the applause was long and hearty: and Dun, his whole soul obviously in the business, rapidly denuded the green boughs, the Master of Ceremonies bending down the branches when they were too lofty for the canine reach.

Three of a Kind

Simple and inexpensive were the gifts, but useful, appropriate, showing genuine thoughtfulness; and right heartily offered and received. They were productive of more merriment, and went further to meet real human needs, than is often true of the perfunctory and impersonal present-making of those whose purse is plethoric.

To one comrade, for instance, Ludovic had presented a carefully prepared manuscript copy of the Hilda song, done in the neatest German script, with certain illuminated initial letters — the work of a German friend in the neighborhood who was a member of a handicraft guild. To another, whose love for the great lyrist of the fatherland was a passion, went the fragments of an autograph letter by Heine, neatly framed: a treasure acquired by the old musician before coming to this coun-

Christmas Eve

try. The burly fellow with the deep voice, who had been especially active in the agitation to reinstate Ludovic in his orchestra seat, was quite overcome to receive a fine new meerschaum which had been taken somewhat unwillingly by the violinist in payment for a small debt incurred by that worthy woman, Mrs. Heckelspeiser, mistress of Ludovic's favorite delicatessen shop: in truth, so friendly was he to her and her wares, that neighborly rumor had gone so far as to suggest the possible eventual union of musician and matron; an idea as foundationless as neighborly rumors usually are.

Nor were the boys slighted. When Tom Phelan, special chum of Phil's, unwrapped a mysterious piece of brown paper to reveal a glittering dagger of foreign make, whose bright blade darted out at the pressure of a spring, veritable

Three of a Kind

awe seemed to fall upon the younger members of the company: this was a pitch above their fondest hopes. They felt dignified even in knowing one who henceforth might carry and carelessly display such a romantic weapon. It was such a useless, splendid, imaginative gift — infinitely more welcome because of its esoteric note, its remote, dim, foreign suggestion.

One boy was greatly tickled over a pretty picture-frame, which he confided to an especial friend present, with a shamefaced snicker, should hold the tin-type of “me best gal.” Another had unconsciously straightened up with an access of pride, in having handed to him a neat little leather case containing the simpler toilet articles. A new régime in the care of his person, it was likely, would begin from this night: his acquaint-

Christmas Eve

ances waxed argumentative over the nail polisher, which one of them insisted was for the rubbing into a shiny state of the human nose, as the years brought it into a condition of blushing prosperity.

It is really quite wonderful how much you can give when you have little or nothing to give with. Ludovic's gift to Phil is worth special mention; it was his mother's letter to the violinist, her lost sweetheart. Ludovic had it laid reverentially in a little russia leather case purchased (most extravagantly) for the purpose; Phil took it without a word and shyly abstained from showing it to the guests, though pressed to do so; but that night, when they were gone, he unlocked the door of his bank and deposited it therein: as precious a bit of paper as ever bank, big or little, held.

When the presents were all distributed,

Three of a Kind

and Dun, warmed to his work, seemed as disconsolate as Alexander because there were no more worlds to conquer, the old musician again stepped forth into the full light, and held up his hand for attention :

“ I have a gift yet, a gift what is not on the tree, good peoples : a gift to myself that I wish that you shall know.” He paused. His voice, always so responsive to his mood and emotion, was indicative of a deeper feeling than he had betrayed before this night. Clearing his throat, he went on, his mobile face standing out dramatically in the candle light, in front of the impressed group of friends, with the dark-toned old room for a background :

“ My dear friends and companions — and Phil’s dear friends too,” — a gracious bow towards the newsboys, — “ you have known me, that I am a lonesome old fellow up here under the roof with my

Christmas Eve

fiddle: I did not know how lonesome I was. Then my — my young friend, Phil, he come and keep me company. *Ja wohl*, we keep house together mit.”

He smiled tenderly at the lad: a sympathetic murmur ran about among his hearers.

“ Only a few days ago I learned some-
dings: a—a—a— dear old friend of mine,
a lady who is now an Engel in Heaven ” —
he paused and with utmost simplicity and
a natural dignity that was part of his
personality, lifted his hand as if in salute
to a saintly memory. There was nothing
strained or out of key in the act to his
audience, which now listened almost with
a kind of wonder, for the fiddler’s face
was aglow with a high emotion:

“ This lady, she write me a letter and
it say she haf a child, a leetle son, — and
she ask me to watch over him because

Three of a Kind

she is *totdt* — dead. But how find I that boy? God is good, my friends, and I learned de other day that Phil here, whom I love already like he was mine, he is the boy, the lady's son, and therefore MY son. That is my gift, my gift from the good Herr Gott; and it comes with the *Christfest*. I have here" — he drew some official looking papers from the pocket of the black coat — "I have here de papers dat make Phil my son: his name it is Phil Heffner; hereafter he belongs to me — und I belong to him. I ask you to — to witness this adoption, my good friends, and to rejoice with me: for the son has come to the father, he was lost und is found."

The silence was deep in the low-studded room up under the eaves. Even the newsboys felt the rich human meaning of the moment and hushed their voices.

Christmas Eve

Then the spell was broken: the musicians with loud acclamations greeted the pair of friends who had discovered a tie so vital — more vital than any tie of blood, a tie based on an old love, glorified by the imagination and sanctified by a memory that overleaped a grave. Phil's friends were filled with unselfish wonder and glee over his strange good luck: and soon the rattle of dishes betokened that all had turned to food and drink, — the most natural and efficacious outlet for human emotions. The refreshments indeed were enjoyed far beyond their merits, for the simple and sufficient reason that to the small gathering of inconspicuous human beings a meal was something more than a meal: being an expression of fellow feeling, a symbol of goodwill on earth.

After the supper there was music, of an

Three of a Kind

excellent quality too. Instruments were drawn from their cases or green baize coverings, and out of honor to their host, the Hilda song was played, with rare expression and fervor; and, responding to a vociferous demand; Ludovic snuggled the brown old "Strad," as he whimsically called his best instrument, under his chin and sang to a violin obligato with a voice which, at first a trifle shaky, gathered volume and vibrancy as he approached the climax, the "Wacht am Rhein," letting loose, as only a German can, all its splendid passion and deep sense of fatherland. It would have warmed the cockles of your heart to see him, and to listen to the way in which the other Deutschers chimed in with the mighty chorus, making the dark old rafters ring again and again.

Ludovic and Phil, their guests departed, the brave Christmas lights out, were to-

Christmas Eve

gether before the ruddy glow of the open wood fire, with Dun, weary and happy, at their feet. The boy had thrown himself in an attitude of unstudied grace on the floor; his hand had stolen into that of the musician's, his head leaned against the other's knee. Gently, with caressing finger-tips, Ludovic stroked his shock of brown hair.

“Und to-morrow, it is Christmas Day.” He spoke in a low, musing tone, almost as if he feared to break a spell. “We shall take a holiday, nicht, mein Phil? We shall go where thou wilt, and it shall be that thy mother” — his voice instinctively sounded to another key, — “she will be mit us in heart, ja, ever with us, my child. We shall be very happy, to-morrow.”

Just here, Dun, sitting up on his haunches, seemed to feel that at this

Three of a Kind

intimate hour he was not given his full share of confidence and affection: he whined plaintively — perhaps to assert his own peculiar claim to kinship — the widest in all the world: the kinship of loving-kindness. Repeating the ingratiating whine, he set his two paws upon the musician's knee: the action said more persuasively than words: "I, too, am I not of the three, adopted into and of the house of Heffner forever? Love me also, my masters, even as my service and my life are yours."

Both boy and man rested their hands gently on the wavy black hair of the faithful dog, whose eloquent eyes looked up at them with an unutterable fealty.

A bell, solemn, slow, struck the midnight hour: before long, now, the shadows would give way to the ghostly half-light of the dawn, making mystery of



BOTH BOY AND MAN RESTED THEIR HANDS GENTLY ON THE
WAVY BLACK HAIR OF THE FAITHFUL DOG.

[Page 266.]

Christmas Eve

the multitudinous city roofs. But with the coming of the sun, those shadows would fleet away and the more jubilant morning bells of the merry season ring in the Birth Wonderful, Good Will to Men. Hark! Even while they listened, the great tumultuous chorus of joy and hope and good cheer began to sound from the steeples. These comrades, hereafter, had memories dear, unforgettable, only gaining in strength and significance with the years: binding them ever closer together. They could face the New Year, sustained, whether in their work or their play, through whatever of joy or sorrow might be their common human lot, by a beautiful, wistful recollection and by the magic of a mighty love.

THE END.

A joyous story. — *Brooklyn Eagle*.

THE ADVENTURES OF CHARLES EDWARD

By HARRISON RHODES

Illustrated by Penrhyn Stanlaws

Cloth, \$1.50

The fun is genuine. — *New York Sun*.

The humor is subtle and delicious. — *Boston Herald*.

One long series of chuckles. — *St. Louis Globe Democrat*.

A most refreshing novel, gay, amusing, and fascinating.
— *London Sketch*.

Nothing better in a light comedy vein has been issued
this season. — *Springfield Union*.

A lively, humorous story which will leave the reader
with a hearty liking for its hero and heroine. — *Baltimore
American*.

The book is enriched by numerous illustrations of
Mr. Stanlaw's peculiarly happy and up-to-date type. —
Baltimore Sun.

Charles Edward is as pleasing a person as one could
meet in many a day. He has a most unusual sense of
humor and a delight in the ludicrous and the unexpected.
— *The Bookman*.

LITTLE, BROWN, & CO., PUBLISHERS

254 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON

A fine masterpiece of French literature. — *Boston Times*.

THE WEIGHT OF THE NAME

By PAUL BOURGET

Translated by GEORGE BURNHAM IVES

12mo. Cloth. \$1.50

A remarkable book. — *Providence Journal*.

Easily the leader among recent works of fiction. — *New York World*.

The story gains immensely in vitality over his earlier work, because he has put his heart in it. — *Outlook*, New York.

There is a profound knowledge of human character that lifts this novel above the plane of ordinary fiction writing. — *Springfield Union*.

The book is more than a love story of rare excellence ; it is a picture of the social and political situation in the France of to-day. — *New Haven Journal and Courier*.

Once in its grip there is no escaping its tragic pathos. . . . The story is especially appealing to the imagination. — Nathan Haskell Dole in *New York Evening Post*.

A powerfully told story, dramatic and poignant. It touches the great emotions and lays bare people's very souls. Paul Bourget employs high literary skill, and this story reveals his mastery of the art of making fiction. — *Philadelphia Record*.

LITTLE, BROWN, & CO., PUBLISHERS

254 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON

The new Oppenheim.

THE LONG ARM OF MANNISTER

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Illustrated by Frank Snapp. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.50

As a creator of ingenious and thrilling plots, Mr. Oppenheim undoubtedly stands first among the fiction writers of the day, and in his latest story he displays his remarkable gift of invention and narration which has placed him "at the head of entertaining writers."

"The Long Arm of Mannister" is unlike any of Mr. Oppenheim's other popular stories. The hero, Mannister, a powerfully drawn character, is the victim of a cruel plot of a band of conspirators. Undaunted by the great odds against him, he proceeds to revenge himself. Circumstances are such that he is obliged to map out an entirely different plan of procedure against each of the conspirators. One by one the brave and resourceful Mannister seeks out his enemies and single-handed administers to them the punishment they deserve. His quest takes him to many parts of the world, and for ingenuity of device and boldness of execution his astounding adventures keep the reader enthralled to the very end.

"Readers of Mr. Oppenheim's novels may always count on a story of absorbing interest, turning on a complicated plot, worked out with dexterous craftsmanship."

— *Literary Digest*, New York.

LITTLE, BROWN, & CO., PUBLISHERS
254 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON

"A gem among detective stories"

THE HEMLOCK AVENUE MYSTERY

By ROMAN DOUBLEDAY

Illustrated by Ch. Grunwald. Cloth, \$1.50

Fifth Printing

Of intense interest. — *Chicago Tribune*.

A detective story of the better kind. — *Providence Journal*.

Detective fiction of most vivid quality. — *Boston Transcript*.

One of the best detective stories ever written. — *Milwaukee, Wisconsin*.

A mystery that defies solution down to the last chapter. — *Philadelphia North American*.

Far and away the best mystery story we have come across in many a day. — *Nashville American*.

Ingenious and original. No step is taken that insults the reader's intelligence. — *New York Sun*.

For pure unguessableness Mr. Doubleday's reporter-detective story has hardly an equal. — *Hartford Courant*.

A gem among detective stories. The book is of entrancing interest from the first page. — *San Francisco Chronicle*.

LITTLE, BROWN, & CO., PUBLISHERS

254 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON

